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General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

13th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 September 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Address by Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sánchez Cerén (*spoke in Spanish*): Given that today is the International Day of Peace, it is an honour to present a message of achievements and challenges from the Republic of El Salvador on the global agenda to General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I would like to express our solidarity and condolences to the people and the Government of Mexico, which have faced a devastating earthquake. We extend the same message of sympathy to the Caribbean countries and the United States, which have been affected by hurricanes.

El Salvador identifies with the central theme of this debate and agrees to follow up on such a vision for the fulfilment of Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Agenda 2030 constitutes an important instrument for the dialogue and consensus-building processes in El Salvador. We have contributed our experiences to the discussion at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to which we submitted our first national voluntary review on the implementation of Agenda 2030.

El Salvador has a national agenda for sustainable development, which was developed through the creation of an institutional architecture for its implementation. We have allocated more than half of public spending to education, health and social protection in order to reduce extreme poverty and enhance social development. We have also increased the allocation of resources to programmes focused on poverty reduction.

In the area of education, which is a priority for our Government, we have made significant progress in eradicating illiteracy and increasing the availability of an inclusive education, while maintaining a high level of primary-education coverage over the past four years. Also noteworthy are our advances in food and nutritional security, through which we have reduced chronic child malnutrition. We promote family farming by supporting small producers, improving their incomes and ensuring food security through participatory and sustainable processes.

In order to address employment and opportunities we established the National Employment System, which

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benefits young people through programmes that bolster their capacities for work, and we are firmly committed to generating a favourable climate for foreign investment. Our duty as a society is to continue our efforts to build upon such positive outcomes and continue on the path to achieve Agenda 2030. It is important to point out that we have great challenges before us, especially in the fiscal area, where agreements are urgently needed if we are to achieve greater dynamism and economic development that goes hand in hand with social progress and benefits for the people.

Such sustainable development requires an environment of peace and security, and for that reason we have promoted a process of dialogue at the political and multisectoral levels. It was out of that process that we developed the Plan El Salvador Seguro. It has a comprehensive approach aimed at addressing the phenomenon of violence, emphasizes prevention and firmly respects human rights. Two years after we began to implement it, we have seen good results, such as reducing the homicide rate by 50 per cent and achieving a similar percentage with regard to extortion.

I must stress that without a financing strategy, adapting Agenda 2030 to national planning becomes a complex exercise. That is why I reiterate the pressing need to link Agenda 2030 to the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action, which sets out more than 100 measures and practices aimed at generating investment that will drive sustainable development over the next 15 years.

In our case, we conceived a financing strategy that embraces all sources and calls for shared responsibilities with regard to achieving the SDGs at the national level. Against that backdrop, we recognize that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to eradicate poverty and inequality, presents a challenge for middle-income countries, such as El Salvador. For nations that are considered to fall in that category, it is imperative to eliminate measurements based solely on average income, or only on economic income, and that conceal economic, social and cultural inequalities. That is why we reaffirm the call to go beyond and move towards the implementation of a multidimensional calculation.

It is equally relevant to refer to sovereign debt, given its negative impacts on development. A restructuring mechanism that promotes a fair and shared distribution between debtors and creditors based on human needs is a priority. On the other hand, a crucial issue for El Salvador is the issue of migration. It is very important to bear in mind that in 2015, when we adopted Agenda 2030, we recognized the positive contribution of migrants on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

That is why my country promoted the inclusion of the migration issue in the SDGs, and we have prioritized it in our national agenda for sustainable development. We believe that achieving a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration presents a true opportunity, but also a challenge. It is an opportunity that will enable us to tackle the issue of migration from a standpoint that ensures human development and human rights, and a challenge that we must commit to addressing in order to eliminate stereotypes that stigmatize migration as a criminal act.

Today, as anti-migration policies and movements gather strength throughout the world, we most energetically condemn xenophobia directed against refugees and migrants. My country therefore believes that it is vital to acknowledge the positive contributions and participation of migrants in their destination societies and their positive effect on sustainable development. One example of that contribution is our temporary protected-status population in the United States, for whom we hope that such status will be extended.

We should facilitate conditions that seek to regulate immigration status and promote the rights of migrants, as well as their integration into the host country culture and labour market, and their health care, education and housing systems, and acknowledge the contribution that they make to the economies of their host societies. In line with that position, we have submitted an initiative to our Legislative Assembly to help regulate the migratory situation of nationals who come from neighbouring countries to El Salvador, mostly for work. In July 2017 we launched our national policy for the protection and development of Salvadoran migrants and their families as a tool aimed at strengthening the protection and promotion of the development of Salvadorans abroad and of their relatives at home, as well as the returning population.

In order to obtain a culture of peace at the global level, it is essential to recognize and give priority to dialogue and peaceful solutions to controversies. As a country that suffered internal armed conflict for over a decade and was able to find lasting solutions only through dialogue and negotiation, we know very

well how important peaceful means are for resolving disputes. In that context, we welcome the fresh efforts for dialogue between the opposition and the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We congratulate the President of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina, on that important initiative.

Furthermore, I call for an end to the economic blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, so that we may begin a new chapter in our Caribbean history and look firmly ahead to the future. We hope for an advance in relations between those two neighbours and hope that other unilateral measures that hinder progress and the well-being of both peoples will be avoided.

My country firmly supports all initiatives that promote and strengthen the disarmament regime, arms regulation and the fight against organized crime and terrorism, and all efforts to achieve international security and world peace. I reiterate our concern in the face of the threat posed to humankind by the existence of weapons of nuclear destruction. The use or threat of use of such weapons is a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international and humanitarian law.

In another area, we must adopt urgent measures to combat the negative effects of climate change, which continue to compromise economic development, natural resources and the well-being of countries such as El Salvador, which produces few greenhouse gases. It concerns us to see regression in the international consensus to fight the negative effects of climate change at the multilateral level.

I wish to end by highlighting that the peace agreements that we signed in 1992, which have now reached their twenty-fifth birthday, taught us that the best victories are those won through the hard work and will of all parties. In that vein, I express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for the support and solidarity that he has provided us with in the process of national dialogue that we are developing in El Salvador, which is now in its second stage towards reaching an agreement.

In that same spirit of joint work and cooperation, I call on Member States to unite in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, truly focusing on people, so that no one is left behind and all those living on this planet can do so in dignity and peace.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of El Salvador for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Union of the Comoros.

Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Assoumani (*spoke in French*): It is an honour to once again address the General Assembly. On this occasion, I would first like to join those who have spoken before me in this Hall to express the great compassion that the people and the Government of my country, the Union of the Comoros, feel for the people and the Government of the United States of America, the host country of the Assembly, in the aftermath of the hurricane that recently devastated Texas.

As an island State, I would also like to extend our greatest sympathy to the French Government and the peoples and islands of the Caribbean for both the heavy loss of life and the magnitude of material damage wrought by Hurricane Irma. Those repeated natural catastrophes are a resonating call to climate sceptics to remind them that now is the time for commitment and action if we wish to mitigate, as far as possible, the causes of such devastating threats linked to global warming.

I would also like to associate the voice of the Comoros with those who spoke earlier today to express our deepest condolences and full solidarity to the Government and the people of Mexico following the violent earthquake that recently struck the heart of Mexico, causing hundreds of deaths and disappearances, as well as tremendous damage.

Allow me to commend the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and to voice true optimism for success in our work under his leadership as a seasoned statesman. His predecessor, His Excellency Peter Thomson, also merits the admiration and gratitude of my delegation and all others for his remarkable energy in accomplishing his mission during the previous session.

To Secretary-General Guterres and to all Members of our prestigious institution, we reiterate our readiness to make our modest contribution towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the upholding of peace and security, for which the United Nations is constantly working with selflessness and devotion.

My country, the Union of the Comoros, on behalf of which I speak, appreciates the responsibility borne by the international community in the light of the gravity of the situation throughout the world and the concerns plaguing people in many countries. I would therefore like to voice our commitment to the United Nations and commend its efforts to tackle present-day challenges and threats to peace, stability and collective prosperity. I welcome the relevance of the theme selected for this seventy-second session, which enables us to highlight the increasingly evident link between the environment, peace and security.

Here, I would like to reiterate our tribute to the Governments of France and Morocco for the work accomplished at the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, encouraging each of our countries, particularly island States, to give utmost priority to everything that has to do with the survival of our planet.

The general theme of our discussion today focuses on people, the striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet, and it incorporates many issues that lie at the heart of the concerns of the international community. They include migration, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, sustainable development and United Nations reform. Speaking about the human being also implies a reference to human rights, including human dignity, which are an uppermost priority for our Organization. Global warming, migrations, conflicts, wars and terrorism are all challenges that all continents, and Africa in particular, are facing and require urgent responses.

Terrorism, which represents the absolute repudiation of the human being, has become a scourge that we condemn and that we must fight mercilessly on a global scale with all our strength. In that regard, I call for the rejection of the dangerous confusion and unfortunate association between the terms "terrorism" and "Islam". There is no Islamic terrorism, just as there is no Christian or Jewish terrorism. Terrorists belong to no faith. Terrorists are simply barbarians.

My country, the Union of the Comoros, which I have the honour to lead, is a country whose people are educated in the practices of a religion, Islam, which advocates love of one's neighbour, tolerance and respect for human dignity. Those principles fly in the face of the cowardly, barbaric acts committed by groups acting faithlessly and lawlessly. By no means can they be associated with our religion.

We vehemently condemn the atrocities targeting minorities and communities — yesterday, unfortunately, in Bosnia and Herzegovina against Muslims and today in Burma against the Rohingyas, as well as atrocities perpetrated against minorities throughout the world. The inhumane and savage nature of such attacks is a shock to our conscience as we see attempts at ethnic cleansing committed against the poorest segments of society. I dare hope that our Organization will be able to uphold the most basic rights of the oppressed, regardless of origin, race, gender and creed.

What priority do we attach to the human being in the face of such ghastly scenes where human rights are trampled upon on a daily basis? The international community must absolutely act to end such acts and punish the perpetrators, at the risk of losing credibility before the people whose eyes are riveted on our institution, which has the right, duty and ability to provide them with protection, dignity and well-being.

It is by guaranteeing peace, security and human rights that we can collectively promote the SDGs, especially for a decent existence, health for all, gender equality and education for new generations. Technological possibilities present immense potential for our young people. Goal 7 of the SDGs is geared to ensuring universal access to reliable, sustainable and modern energy services at an affordable cost. The lack of widespread access to electricity is a hindrance to sustainable growth, particularly in Africa.

In the Union of the Comoros, in one year, we managed to end the electricity shortages and constant load-shedding that had plagued our economy, our businesses and our homes, and to emerge from a protracted energy crisis. However, now that the emergency is over, we need to ensure that those results can be made long-term through a medium- and long-term energy policy and through the development of renewable energy with a low-carbon footprint. To succeed in that and achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, we must rely on ourselves and our own resources above all. However, we need international solidarity, but also the solidarity of industrialists, bankers and international investors.

The Union of the Comoros has returned to political stability after witnessing three peaceful transfers of power at the highest State level over the past 15 years. Today, we are offering an incentive policy and support measures with a more attractive investment code.

My country, as a small island developing State, is subject to myriad risks. Nevertheless, my Government's determination to work for the well-being of our people has prompted us to set a goal of making the Union of the Comoros an emerging country by 2030. There is great optimism driving us forward, and we hope that indicators will soon attest to our progress towards that ambitious and lofty goal. The main thrusts of our Government converge on the achievement of that goal, which is underpinned by a national development strategy.

Furthermore, there is a great deal of work under way to endow my country in the near future with adequate resources in terms of energy, road, port and airport infrastructure, economic recovery and the establishment of a framework for consultations. That will bring the private and public sectors closer together and will afford opportunities for civil society and political parties to fully play their roles.

For that reason, at the initiative of the elders and leaders of our country, we have launched an inclusive dialogue among the various components and forces of the Comorian nation. There are plans to hold a national forum in December to take stock of our 42 years of independence. That is an inclusive, broadened national framework, one that includes all national life forces. Its mission is to assess the past, draw lessons from it and plan for a better future under better conditions.

I have therefore unreservedly embraced this participatory, inclusive and representative approach, and the debates will lead to conclusions on everything that will strengthen the peace, security, calm and stability of the country and determine its future by drawing lessons from the past. In order for that important event to come to the hoped-for historic conclusions for the benefit of our people, I ask for the partnership and support of the international community and international and regional institutions, to which I would like to reiterate here once again our gratitude and our most sincere thanks for their unfailing support, especially when the Comoros almost sank into chaos 20 years ago. It is with their invaluable assistance that the country has returned to the path of peace and stability.

The displacement of populations — in other words, migration — destabilizes both the countries of origin and the host countries. However, the Union of the Comoros refuses to allow the term "immigrants" to be applied to Comorians who visit the Island of Mayotte, which is an integral part of its territory, despite the fact that it unfortunately remains under French administration. Indeed, the thousands of my compatriots who die each year in their attempts to go to Mayotte, a part of their territory, is not an immigration issue. The question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte relates to territorial integrity. Forty-two years after my country acceded to its international sovereignty, and in the absence of a solution to the issue since 1975, that question continues not only to weaken stability but also to hinder the country's socioeconomic development.

I therefore welcome the continuation of the dialogue between my country and France in the quest for a just and equitable solution to the dispute over the Comorian Island of Mayotte, consistent with international law and respectful of the interests of each party. I pray to Allah, the Almighty that He will keep us alive so that next year from this same rostrum I will be able to share with the Assembly the positive and consensual results of that dialogue.

France is a permanent member of the Security Council. Its history links it to freedom, democracy, justice, respect for international law and the promotion of peace. It does not intend to divide or separate a people. Its interest, like ours, lies in a world of stability and a peaceful and prosperous Indian Ocean region looking towards a better future.

In the Near East and the Middle East, the international community must mobilize further to end the martyrdom of the thousands of children crushed

under bombs, the hunger imposed on populations, the use of chemical weapons, the chaos and the partition processes in countries at war. The international community must sanction the use of chemical weapons. We must act to ensure that hope is restored for the displaced and refugees and that the countries affected can recover their stability and territorial integrity.

With regard to the Middle East, the lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the current status quo are fuelling insecurity and destabilization in the region. The solution to that conflict lies in stopping the unacceptable colonization of the Palestinian territories, the end of injustice and violence against the Palestinian populations and the global settlement of the conflict, which is more than a half century old, on the basis of the two-State solution, which will fulfil the Palestinian people's right to full sovereignty, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Beyond solidarity speeches, support for causes, the condemnation of attacks on friendly countries and peoples, the expressions of compassion for victims, and the calls for respect for the right of peoples, the sovereignty of States and the integrity of their territories, we must show greater commitment. In any case, the Union of the Comoros believes in the United Nations and its capacity to face today's challenges. We believe that such an Organization is possible. We believe that we are able to build such a United Nations together.

Before concluding my remarks, allow me to take the opportunity of the coming of the Islamic New Year 1439 to convey to the General Assembly my greetings and best wishes for peace, progress and prosperity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Union of the Comoros for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Palau.

Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Remengesau: I would like first to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election to lead our work in the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I would also like to thank his Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson for his exceptional service during his recently completed term as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

At the outset, the people of Palau extend our deepest condolences to those who have had their lives devastated by the recent spate of hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes and other natural disasters across Asia and the Americas. We must not forget that many do not have the resources necessary to rebuild. The international community must work harder to ensure that they are not abandoned. Such record-breaking storms are a harbinger of worse to come on a hotter planet.

Palau, in the Pacific, has experienced at first hand the impact of climate extremes. For us, those super-storms are akin to ticking time bombs: no one knows when or where the next one will detonate, but we are keenly aware that they can wipe out years of progress in the span of hours.

The President's clear determination to focus future efforts on conflict prevention, peace, migration and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet is certainly timely and well attuned to the realities of our generation. In fact, his attention to those very different yet related issues demonstrates a clear understanding of the complex times in which we live and the need to connect the dots between the causes and the effects of the interrelated challenges that we face.

In this modern world, we must continue to expand our cooperation at every level — private, public, not-for-profit and political — within the context of a global network that establishes fair and transparent guidelines that prescribe how to act and react to those dynamic topics. The only body that can fill that essential void is the United Nations.

With respect to sustainable development, we recognized, in 2015, through the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, that a global rights-based regime was necessary in the context of a global partnership, if we are to successfully eradicate poverty, address universal inequalities and provide economic and social opportunities to all for the peoples of the world.

Through the creation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, we finally recognized that the oceans are a resource that belong to and serve all the peoples of the world and must be protected as such. By coming together and finally agreeing on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we established a global commitment to begin the process of reducing greenhouse gases to acceptable levels.

Yet even as we worked hard to respond to that global environmental crisis through joint actions, we have found other issues of security and peace taking the forefront in our international conversation. As the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) is pushed back from its strongholds in Syria and Iraq, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been firing missiles and detonating atomic and possibly hydrogen bombs, thereby threatening worldwide peace and harmony. At the same time, migrants throughout the world are forced to flee their countries to escape the ever-increasing levels of violence.

Those are issues that must be dealt with globally through strong multinational institutions and partnerships. If those efforts are to be successful within the framework of the United Nations, the United Nations must be strengthened so that all of its members can believe in the fairness and effectiveness of the overall international negotiation and dispute-resolution process. These are the issues that our global focus is centred upon: a decent life for all and a sustainable planet.

I believe that we can all agree that, in terms of peace and security, inclusive sustainable development frequently prevents conflicts and sustains peace. However, peace is not always achievable, and when that is the case, the United Nations must facilitate efforts to respond to aggression and violence. Palau therefore supports all efforts and United Nations resolutions aimed at bringing North Korea to the negotiating table. The threat posed to the innocent people of Guam is a threat to us in Palau and the entire region. Palau also reaffirms its support for international efforts to eradicate terrorist organizations, such as ISIS and Al-Qaida. We must also support the Secretary-General's efforts to revamp the United Nations architectures and procedures for peace and security development and management as a significant component of the overall reform of the Organization.

The Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) face a unique set of security and development challenges. However, the United Nations presence in the region is quite limited. In shepherding that process, I urge the Secretary-General to recall the guiding principle that was so successful in delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: leave no country behind.

Taking into account the recent actions by North Korea, we must take seriously the long-term need to ban nuclear weapons. A good place to start would be by acceding to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I must give credit to the leaders of my country, who, more than 30 years ago, recognized the threat of nuclear weapons and banned the use, testing and storage of nuclear weapons in Palau's Constitution. In their honour, I signed that Treaty yesterday.

If we are to find success in achieving our 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, we are going to have to face the hard reality that the costs are very significant. Success will require all available partnerships and the development of the necessary means of implementation in line with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action, known as the Samoa Pathway.

In the area of climate change, we must continue to work to achieve the full implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. I would like to congratulate my colleague from the Pacific His Excellency Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama of Fiji on his imminent ascension to the presidency of the upcoming twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In order to strengthen his efforts, Palau is seeking the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for climate and security. The appointment of a Special Representative would significantly aid us in our preparations to confront that multifaceted challenge and would enhance United Nations reform proposals.

My country, although small, is very proud of its commitment to achieving our Global 2030 Agenda. To

help protect our oceans, we have established one of the largest protected areas in the world. Within that context, we emphasize our support for a new implementing agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. We have also supported resolution WCC-2016-Res-050, entitled "Increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation", adopted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in 2016, which promises to work towards designating and effectively setting aside at least 30 per cent of coastal States' national waters as marine protected areas by 2030. In addition, we have committed to addressing and taking action with regard to marine pollution in all its forms.

At the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, Palau also called on other countries to join it in becoming parties to the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, an international treaty that will help stop the transfer of illegally caught fish and marine life through our ports. I would like to make the same appeal here today.

In our work to save our oceans, we welcome the appointment of His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji as the first Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Oceans, which promises to bring greater attention to one of our most urgent priorities. Palau extends its congratulations to its close friend from Fiji.

Those types of commitment require the strong support of a broad alliance of partners. Fortunately, my country has a long history of strong partnerships. The United States continues to support Palau in its development and movement towards economic independence. We have a shared history and over the decades have become close friends. We recognize the unique relationship that we share. In these difficult times, we support and participate in the efforts of the United States, on behalf of the world community, to combat terrorism, bring closure to the hostilities in Syria and reduce the nuclear threat emanating from North Korea. We also thank the United States for its ongoing support for our efforts to establish our national marine sanctuary. We look forward this year to completing our compact of free association agreement with the United States, which will reflect that close and special relationship.

Palau also would like to acknowledge the great friendship that it has with Japan and the very significant economic support that we have received from that country over the years. We continue to express our support for the expansion and reform of the Security Council and Japan's permanent membership on the Security Council. We wish to express our sincere thanks for the Nippon Foundation's generous support to enhance partnership and collaboration in our marine surveillance and enforcement efforts. We would also like to recognize the very broad list of partners across the world who make our efforts to achieve a sustainable future possible, including the Republic of China on Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Monaco, Italy, the Netherlands, the European Union, private organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, among many others.

At the end of the day, our success will depend upon the development and maintenance of genuine and durable partnerships at every level of society. The issues that we face are becoming increasingly severe, dangerous and global in scope. They cannot be dealt with at the national or regional level alone. At no time in the history of my country or, indeed, the history of the world has the need for a strong global partnership of countries, organizations and people, through a single binding assembly of nations been more important. The United Nations has the potential to reconcile our global issues if — and only if — its Members are willing to recognize those issues and take the necessary action to develop and implement appropriate solutions.

My small country — despite its size — is willing to act in concert with the other nations of this great Organization to achieve a better life for our children, grandchildren and all future generations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Palau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tommy Esang Remengesau Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (*spoke in Spanish*): Although we currently live in a world of unrest and insecurity that is being scourged by an unprecedented global economic crisis, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is participating rather optimistically in the political and diplomatic open debates on the items on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. We believe that the topics selected for debate encapsulate the concern of every nation to achieve the objectives that were proposed in San Francisco in 1945, so that we can achieve a world of peace, well-being and security for humankind.

We wish to congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. We believe that his wealth of political and diplomatic experience, that of his Government and the experience of the other members of the Bureau will help to guide our fruitful discussions to build a better world.

We also hope that the work of this session will continue on from the previous session's endeavours, during which, under the guidance of His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, the United Nations made a correct assessment of the current state of global affairs. That further fuels our optimism that we can arrive at definitive and sustainable solutions for the complex problems affecting our planet. In that joint endeavour, the work of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, has been highly praiseworthy, which is evident from the selection of issues before us.

It should be recalled once again that Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations enshrines the intent of its Member States to build a world of peace and well-being for humanity by encouraging friendly relations and mutual respect for the independence and sovereignty of every nation. No Member State should consider itself exempt from that duty. We believe that all the Governments of the world, if one is politically honest, are working for the welfare of their nations, which is why every country designs programmes to promote human rights, the democratization of society and socioeconomic development, thus ensuring the well-being of their populations.

However, despite our optimism in this debate, we express our deep concern about the numerous armed conflicts and the sociopolitical instability that are ruining the socioeconomic structure of States, precisely because of interventions in the internal affairs of other States, which is specifically condemned by the Charter of the United Nations.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is greatly concerned, because major wars that have destroyed entire nations have had Member States as powerful participating actors. Such States believe that armed force is the only way to bring about peace and resolve conflicts, while forgetting that war can never do that. Rather, it compounds and perpetuates conflicts, leading to disorder, destruction, desolation and ruin. Military force should never be the recourse used by the United Nations to ensure international peace and security. The Assembly must remember that international peace and security can be ensured only when every country enjoys internal peace and each country's fundamental and inalienable rights are respected.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is fully aware of and grateful for the support and confidence of almost all Member States regarding its candidacy as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We wish to convey here our total rejection of the use of force as the only recourse available to the United Nations.

We are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We condemn not only the use and manufacture of such weapons in conflicts between States, but also their possession and distribution. We believe that the terms of that Treaty are still insufficient — they should include the destruction of nuclear weapons, wherever they may be. Their possession by some States makes other States believe they have the right to possess them as well.

As a member of the Security Council, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea will cooperate with all States to ensure peace in the world, which should mean ensuring peace in each country and protecting its political, economic, social and cultural rights.

There is also a great deal of uncertainty about the fact that, despite the commendable initiatives in the 1990s

to combat malnutrition, hunger, climate change and others, and despite the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals held in 2010, after more than 20 years not much progress has been seen in those areas. On the contrary, there has been an increase in the number of people in the world who go hungry; the environment continues to deteriorate, causing major disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis and the deaths of thousands of human beings and the destruction of the infrastructure needed for human existence. The United Nations is still very far from achieving the established goals for the well-being of humankind.

We take this opportunity to express the condolences and solidarity of the people and the Government of Equatorial Guinea to the nations suffering from disasters: Mexico, the United States, the countries of the Caribbean and Sierra Leone, in Africa.

At the same time that we see those factors, we are also witnessing international terrorism, extremism, xenophobia, human trafficking, emigration, piracy, the phenomenon of mercenaries, major epidemics, transborder crimes and an acute economic crisis that is currently affecting the entire world. All of those phenomena make it necessary to achieve greater awareness among nations of the need to establish more direct cooperation among States and for all nations to undertake united, dynamic and coordinated action.

No matter how powerful a country may be, such events mean that we must all pay attention, because no State is exempt from the responsibilities resulting from the overbearing actions taken by some States against others. We must therefore focus more on bringing about peace in the world and ensuring a healthy environment, eliminating nuclear weapons and combating terrorism and piracy, which affect all countries. No country should act as a policeman who imposes on others the principles of good governance, to which we all have committed ourselves anyway.

We want a world with a spirit that is equally participatory and egalitarian for women and men, and for nations large and small. We want a reform of the Security Council that enables the equitable participation of all continents and guarantees the rights of all nations. We want cooperation based on fairness. We want respect for the cultural principles and values that ensure the existence of every nation throughout the ages. The premise here is that, in the absence of wars and the adverse phenomena we have mentioned, the world could move towards sustainable development, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea has taken a giant step forward in its development, such that expectations for its economic emergence have been estimated to occur by 2020. Unfortunately, however, its strategy has had to be considerably modified because of the current economic crisis. That is what is currently being experienced in our country with regard to peace and development.

The threats to peace and stability that we have seen over recent years have been provoked from the outside, with attempts to occupy the country and acts of piracy and terrorism that have been aimed at destabilizing the peaceful and democratic system of the existing Government. They are attempts to disturb the peace and create riots for the benefit of fortune-hunting adventurers. That has resulted in unjust and gratuitous accusations against the leaders of our country and others in the subregion, disparaging the legitimacy of our national sovereignty, and even ignoring the decisions of international justice. All of that has been part of an attempt to confuse international public opinion about the reality of the progress achieved by Equatorial Guinea in order to justify, as always, an intention to impose so-called humanitarian intervention in our country.

In conclusion, we appeal for greater global consensus to fight the phenomena impeding the progress and well-being of humankind. A more inclusive and participatory consensus on the strategies of action of the United Nations and other international economic organizations is needed. The United Nations must lead us forward with the idea of a globalized world engaged in united action that does not condemn or punish, but rather helps the most needy to overcome the challenges of development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Carvalho (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour and joy for me to speak before the General Assembly for the first time as Head of State of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. The elections of 2016, which brought me to power, once again illustrated unequivocally the level of democracy in Sao Tome and Principe and the regular functioning of its institutions.

At the outset, allow me to take this opportunity to dedicate the first few words of my statement to His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajcák, whom I congratulate on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, and to whom I convey our full support for his mandate and wishes for his great success. I would also like to congratulate the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, for the manner in which he conducted the work of the General Assembly at its previous session, that is to say, judiciously, with enthusiasm and unselfishness, in an international context that has posed serious challenges to our Organization.

I also take this opportunity, before such a distinguished audience, to congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres on his outstanding election. I am convinced that his political stature will undoubtedly enable him to lead the United Nations and address the multiple global challenges involving the necessary reform of the Organization, including the Security Council, and efforts to promote peace, sustainable development and human rights.

Within the context of the complex global environment, the current challenges facing our peoples and countries are forcing us to delve deeper into the guiding spirit that undergirded the foundation of our Organization as the ultimate and global guarantor in the search for peaceful and lasting solutions that are consensual and valid under international laws, so that we might reach the desired goals of peace, security, stability and progress for all humankind. As such, we can take advantage of this unique opportunity to pursue our collective reflection aimed at strengthening the role of the Organization. To that end, it is therefore urgent to carry out essential reforms that correspond to the dynamics of today's globalized world — that is, to enable the various specialized agencies of the United Nations to act swiftly, effectively and in accordance with to a process that was intended to be inclusive of all nations, as mandated under the Charter of the United Nations, signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco.

On the other hand, we must strengthen our awareness of the need to implement mechanisms that allow for greater inclusion in decision-making and strategic planning, which are the guiding principles of international financial institutions, namely, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We firmly believe that that is the only way for the economies of the developing countries to integrate more swiftly into the global development process, whose benefits have not yet been fully reflected in our own countries, while allowing for the renewal and strengthening of the credibility of those institutions, which we consider to be of central importance to the functioning of the global financial system, and to support our economic growth efforts aimed at the social and human development of our populations.

The theme of this session of the General Assembly, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet", fits perfectly with the present reality in which we live and corresponds to the challenges we face in search of a better world. Therefore, because the primary focus of any national, regional or international policy is to prioritize people and their yearning for a better life, as well as the continuous improvement of the mechanisms needed to meet those goals, the effort to achieve world peace is urgent and encompasses fundamental values that, we are certain, we all stand for and strive to achieve. The serious conflicts that are troubling the world are of constant concern, and their harmful consequences — which

affect the well-being of humankind, the balance of relations among our nations and our economic, social and human development — must be firmly and uncategorically eschewed by us all.

In our view, the divisions that we are now seeing are the consequence of a lack of sincere, comprehensive and thoughtful dialogue among all parties. We cannot allow religious fanaticism, isolationism and populist rhetoric, which today are anachronisms — and I would even add selfish — to prevent us from accepting and living with others' differences or to continue to lead to such a degree of discord, thereby aggravating tensions and cutting short many lives, including those of our children, who, if they are well cared for, represent the real future of our planet.

In that regard, we call for dialogue that will stress the central mediating role of our Organization in order to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula.

It is also necessary to stop the proliferation of weapons in Syria, where people continue to live under the threat of bomb attacks that have destroyed the country and torn apart its social fabric while claiming many innocent lives. There is also a need to accelerate dialogue and the peace process in the Middle East, to which we once again make a firm appeal from this rostrum to find a peaceful and negotiated solution respecting the right of the Palestinian people to conduct their own destiny, thereby respecting the basic principles of the United Nations.

Similarly, there is an urgent need to find a solution at the negotiating table for the tensions in Ukraine, the issue of Western Sahara and our brother country, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, which we greet warmly, and express the wish that its institutions will soon be restored to their regular functions.

Although the recent ministerial meeting of the African initiative for peace and national reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which took place in the Gabonese Republic on 17 July, was a step in the right direction, we have followed with great concern the deterioration of the security situation there, with incalculable humanitarian consequences, sadly pointing to a situation of genocide. We therefore appeal for efforts to be made to avoid another humanitarian disaster in that African country.

We cannot but deplore the terrorist acts that unfortunately continue to claim so many lives throughout the world. The barbarity and disrespect for the precious good that is human life, committed through those indescribable, appalling and inhumane acts, warrant our firmest and vehement condemnation. In that regard, we underline the atrocities committed by Boko Haram, among others, in our neighbouring and sister country Nigeria, which destabilized the entire region and severely slowed the implementation of sustainable development policies. Furthermore, they have an undeniable echo in the deterioration of security in the Gulf of Guinea, where acts of maritime piracy and the illegal activities associated with it have plagued our region. The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, a State that is peaceful, democratic and open to dialogue, will always stand side by side with its regional and international partners in all initiatives seeking to eradicate that phenomenon from our societies.

If, as the theme of the session invokes, we truly want to create the conditions for people to lead decent lives, it is urgent to address the problem of migratory crises. Every day, we are confronted with the tragedies of thousands of people who, as they seek to escape conflicts and the miserable conditions that affect their countries, risk perishing on trips in precarious circumstances as they go in search of a better life. There should be no doubt that no one leaves their homeland or faces such dangers on a whim.

There is a civic, ethical and moral responsibility to welcome those people and provide them with the indispensable humanitarian assistance necessary, but also to create conditions conducive to mitigating the phenomenon in the countries of origin. That involves the adoption of concerted policies for the reception of refugees and the provision of support to countries of origin with a view to fostering an environment of peace and stability, so that they can provide the conditions necessary for their people to take part in the life projects they choose.

We also underline the important work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, under the co-chairmanship of Germany and Morocco, which began in January and will run until the end of 2018. This shared leadership has made contributions to the United Nations Global Compact for Migration, which, we are convinced, will lead to the much-desired policy of improved global migration to be adopted by the international community in 2018.

We also welcome the recent French initiative that brought together a European-Africa joint mini-summit, held in Paris in late August, that sought to find ways to overcome Africa's significant migratory flow to Europe, which has also transformed the Mediterranean Sea into a veritable cemetery.

I cannot fail to mention the Sustainable Development Goals, the priorities of which go directly to the core of what we have been expressing. If we achieve — as we believe it possible to do — the eradication of poverty and hunger, the promotion of social and economic development, the protection of the rights of all, gender equality, the empowerment of women, a reversal of climate change, access to quality services and the provision of special attention to vulnerable groups, then we will see a positive evolution in the living conditions within our nations. Let us therefore all work to that end.

In that regard, we highlight the efforts of the African Union, enshrined in the guidelines of the important and ambitious Agenda 2063. Its implementation and success will contribute greatly to making such objectives more easily reachable. It is without a doubt an inclusive document, based on the cultural specificities of each country, which consciously demand from our Governments a very clear commitment to its success.

However successful we may be in achieving the goals of peace, stability and progress on a world scale, none of it will make any sense if we do not know how to take care of our planet. Combating the phenomenon of climate change is perhaps the most complex objective requiring all humankind to participate. The success of this fight is perhaps the greatest legacy we can leave to future generations.

In that context, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is a historic, broad-based consensus on the challenges we face in that area and the financial and technological means to overcome them. However, the measures proposed have yet to be implemented. Every day we further postpone the issue, the more our planet suffers. Increasingly extreme weather events cause irreparable damage to our ecosystem and life on Earth. I therefore appeal, without prejudice, for the the members of the Assembly to demonstrate political boldness, in the understanding that each should contribute according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Sao Tome and Principe, a small island developing State, has spared no effort in that regard, and I want to assure those present of our firm commitment to being at the forefront of implementing climate-change mitigation measures. However, I note, along with many other speakers, that funding for such measures lacks the support of the international community. Cooperation agreements should be established with ambitious funding for climate issues and guarantees for the effective and efficient transfer of technology by the more developed countries.

As those present know, our economy is extremely vulnerable, as it depends on official development assistance to meet almost 90 per cent of its needs. In the context of international financial containment, it becomes necessary to consider and design alternative ways of addressing that complex situation. It was with that in mind that the current Government of Sao Tome and Principe decided to implement an ambitious agenda of transformation for the 2030 horizon. It is fundamentally aimed at changing the paradigm of growth and economic and social development policies, with a strategic focus on the private sector of our economy. The new strategic direction, as reflected in its guidelines, is in perfect harmony with the aspirations of both the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063. We believe in its success and have the necessary ambition, but we will not be able to achieve it without the strong support of our traditional partners and the international community.

In that regard, I would like to remind the Assembly that, based on the recognition of the One China principle, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe re-established diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China late last year. We are certain that this decision will help to strengthen our strategic partnership, and we hope that China will accompany us on the difficult path to development that we have proposed with our transformation agenda 2030.

In addition, we support the development efforts of Cuba's friendly population and wish to reiterate our call for further efforts to normalize its relations with the United States of America so that it will act as soon as possible to lift the embargo that for decades has been an obstacle to Cuba's progress.

In an era of proliferating technological means at the disposal of humankind, our increasingly attentive and informed societies demand a renewed effort to accomplish the noble mission of our Organization. Let us therefore seek inspiration in its founding

principles, the quest for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, humanitarian support for all those in need, the promotion of inclusive and constructive dialogue, the protection of our ecosystem and the promotion and guarantee of human rights, which are vital for the harmonious development of our nations.

The Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe will continue to fight for such ideals, joining forces and willpower for its materialization.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Address by Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Robert Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mugabe: I wish to congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I also thank his predecessor, Mr. Thomson, for his commitment to and efforts in accelerating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The President could not have chosen a better or more relevant theme for this session, given the times that we are living in, for the pursuit and maintenance of peace and the promotion of development, in solidarity, lie at the core of the mission of the United Nations and its entire system. Since the signing of the Charter of the United Nations 72 years ago, and in subsequent conventions, resolutions and declarations adopted over the decades, Member States have sought to actualize the unquenchable human hope for peace, justice and progress.

However, the current global development agenda differs in significant ways from all of those that preceded it. It is ambitious, revolutionary, transformative and universal, and it encompasses every single facet of human life. For its success, the agenda demands a radical, unprecedented paradigm shift in every sphere of human life.

We cannot halt or reverse the continued destruction of our natural habitat or the rise in global atmospheric temperature without a change in contemporary production and consumption patterns. That has been confirmed by scientific evidence. We cannot halt or reverse the persistent, widening gap between the rich and the poor among our nations without deeper international cooperation and a genuine reform of the existing inequitable international system. The current system is inherently structured to enrich a few and impoverish the many. Therefore, it cannot deliver on a key aspiration, watchword and objective of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — that of leaving no one behind.

For us in Africa, the current antiquated system perpetuates a historic injustice — one that can never be justified today. The 2030 Agenda represents new wine, and we call for a new wineskin, lest we ruin the new wine. It is for that reason that I reiterate my country's unflinching support for the African Common Position on Security Council reform, commonly known as the Ezulwini Consensus.

The overwhelming majority of us have accepted that we need to reform the current system in order to improve, but not destroy it. Nonetheless, the negotiations and process intended to yield the accepted reforms are painstakingly slow. We are left to wonder, justifiably so, whether those who enjoy and sometimes abuse the power and privileges of the current set-up are sincere interlocutors in those discussions.

It is axiomatic that we harvest what we sow, yet by some strange logic we expect to reap peace when we invest and expend so much, in treasure and technology, in war. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, global military expenditure in 2016 amounted to approximately $1.6 trillion. In the same year, according to the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development, overseas development assistance amounted to approximately $142.6 billion. Those mega investments in ever more lethal weapons and more sophisticated war machinery have not resulted in greater peace or security. Instead, we have witnessed heart-rending suffering and misery and increased mass movements of people fleeing wars and armed conflicts. That trend should be halted for the benefit of humankind.

We believe that a different and better world is possible. In proposing and inviting us to focus on prevention, preventive diplomacy, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, the Secretary-General is pointing us in that desirable direction. We must also seriously tackle the multifaceted and complex root causes of conflict, including enduring poverty and deprivation, unequal access to resources, the denial of the right to self-determination of peoples, and interference in the internal affairs of other States, among other causes.

The continued denial of the right to self-determination to the peoples of Western Sahara and Palestine, who are living under colonial and foreign occupation, is immoral and an urgent issue for those seeking peace and security in our time. The Security Council has assumed its responsibilities, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and adopted numerous resolutions. What remains is the enforcement and implementation of those resolutions.

We call on the Security Council to demonstrate its authority by ensuring the holding, without much further delay, of the independence referendum in Western Sahara. We expect the Security Council to work closely with the African Union — its proven partner for peace on the African continent — in that effort. The ever-deteriorating situation and continued suffering of the Palestinian people should spur the Security Council to renewed, time-framed efforts to bring about the two-State solution already defined in numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Development and peace are conjoined and cannot be separated. My country has embraced the 2030 Agenda as an integrated and comprehensive approach to address the myriad and complex national and global challenges, in solidarity and in cooperation with other stakeholders. Zimbabwe was honoured to be among some other 40-plus countries that participated in the voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum in July.

We were and still are pleased to share with other countries our experiences and to learn from others about their experiences in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. We recognize the need for beneficial partnerships, both within and outside our national borders. One of our key partners is the United Nations system, with which, I am happy to note, we work very closely. I wish in that regard to welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to ensure that the support of United Nations country teams will be guided by national priorities. That will ensure national ownership and leadership of development processes, as well as the sustainability of development projects and programmes. That is what we are experiencing in Zimbabwe.

My country is an unflinching advocate of respect for the sovereignty and independence of countries. We therefore strongly defend and respect the right of each country to take decisions in exercising its sovereign rights. We cannot, however, remain silent when those decisions impact or have the potential to negatively affect our own welfare. And to that end, may I say that some of us were embarrassed, if not frightened by what appeared to be the return of the biblical giant Goliath.

Are we experiencing the return of a Goliath in our midst that threatens the extinction of all countries? May I say to the United States President, Mr. Trump, that he please blow his trumpet in a musical way towards the values of unity, peace, cooperation, togetherness and dialogue, for which we have always stood and that are enshrined in our very sacred document, the Charter of the United Nations. Upon those values each nation, including the United States, can build its greatness. And it is the greatness in recognizing those values of unity, peace, cooperation, dialogue and togetherness that we would want to be guided by the United States, and not by the promise of our damnation. We shall always resist damnation, no matter whence it comes. We resisted it when it was in the form of imperialism as we fought for our own independence, our own culture and our own sovereignty, and to be masters of our own destiny. That is why we call ourselves free today. It is because the monster of imperialism was defeated by us. Bring us another monster, by whatever name, and it will suffer the same consequences.

Climate change is a present reality and so are its effects and impacts. Climate change is global. We

cannot remain silent when a major world economic Power, or any other State for that matter, decides to abandon the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, as Mr. Trump's great United States has done. Let us work together. Climate change is a reality. It is vital that we all play our part, in keeping with the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in order to halt the inexorable march towards the destruction of that on which our own existence depends.

On behalf of my country, I want to express our condolences to Puerto Rico and to countries that have suffered afflictions. There are many in this part of the world. We say that we are very sorry and we appeal to the rest of us, who have not suffered similar afflictions, to assist those who have suffered in such a horrific manner. I ask anyone here to watch television today and tell me whether they know where Puerto Rico is geographically. It has been completely wiped out by a hurricane. We are very sorry.

As I conclude my remarks, it is worth reminding one another that the world today, by its very interconnectedness, demands more, not less, solidarity; more, not less, cooperation and dialogue; more, not less, multilateralism. We have brought more and more issues under the global agenda and within global discourse. That acknowledgement has found expression in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the Sustainable Development Goals. Our survival and progress calls for reinforced solidarity, partnerships and cooperation and for development in unity, cooperation and peace. That is a call to which we must all respond positively and actively. Zimbabwe is already doing so.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Kalla (Indonesia): Allow me to begin by wishing a happy new year to those who celebrate the Islamic New Year 1439 Hijri. May peace be upon us all.

I would also like to extend Indonesia's deep sympathy with and condolences to those affected by the recent natural disasters, including the earthquake in Mexico, the hurricanes in the Caribbean and parts of the United States, as well as floods in South Asia and other parts of the world. Our prayers go out to all the victims.

May I congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. Indonesia is committed to contributing to his successful presidency. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji for his able stewardship as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session. We commend his role in driving a universal push for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We are all represented on the same world map, yet we see many different worlds. Our world today is far from equitable. The peoples of our world experience war, hunger, extreme poverty and illiteracy. Peace and equal prosperity are far from being reached. Therefore, Indonesia welcomes the theme of this year's session, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet". The theme recognizes the importance of placing the needs of our peoples first and highlights the fact that peace, prosperity, and sustainability are mutually reinforcing. In that context, I wish to underline three important points for achieving peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet.

First, it must be underlined that peace is never given; rather, it has to be developed and nurtured. We must work towards creating a global ecosystem of peace and stability. Indonesia's experience in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations shows that building such an ecosystem is fundamental. It is fundamental for economic development and fundamental for the prosperity of the people.

Indonesia firmly believes that developing a global ecosystem of peace and stability is doable. However, to succeed we must practice the habits of dialogue, inclusiveness, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the non-use of force. More importantly, we must develop the United Nations as a robust global institution that emphasizes the maintenance of peace, security and stability. Key to that is ensuring that the United Nations reform process results in a strong, effective and relevant United Nations. It was for that reason that Indonesia co-sponsored the declaration of support for United Nations reform.

Furthermore, we must also strengthen international peacekeeping and peacebuilding mechanisms. Indonesia is honoured to have played a part in mediating conflicts, peacekeeping and peacebuilding beyond our borders. We have been and will always be ready to be a part of a global solution. Over the past 60 years, we have contributed more than 38,000 personnel to 28 United Nations peacekeeping operations. We currently deploy more than 2,700 peacekeepers in nine peacekeeping missions. We are also determined to contribute 4,000 personnel by 2019 and increase the number of female peacekeepers.

Beyond peacekeeping, Indonesia is an active member of the Peacebuilding Commission. We underline the need to ensure sustainable peace at the global level, which requires a global culture of prevention. It is also important to ensure a strong partnership among the United Nations, the relevant regional organizations and national Governments.

A global ecosystem of peace and stability requires the international community to settle one of the longest-standing unresolved conflicts — that of Palestine and Israel. This year marks half a century of the illegal occupation of Palestine. We shall not give up. Palestine is at the heart of Indonesian foreign policy, and Indonesia will continue to support it. After 50 years of stalemate, we need a fresh approach — one that is sustainable and innovative and can bring about a two-State solution.

We must not stop with the attainment of sustainable peace. A decent life for all people must be our global goal. That leads me to my second point. There must be synergies between sustaining peace and the development agenda. We must cultivate peace and stability to work for us in achieving sustainable development. The international system is well equipped to attain a decent life for all. A number of global commitments have been agreed, including the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, to name but two.

However, commitments must be translated into concrete actions. The key to that is the means of implementation for the least developed and developing countries. Adequate funding, technical assistance, capacity-building and the transfer of technology are important elements for success. It is also important to support regions with huge potential that have undertaken great reforms towards sustainable development.

Africa is one such region. For Indonesia, South-South and triangular cooperation is our way to support development in the least developed and developing countries. Over the past three years, we have organized 167 South-South and triangular cooperation programmes, from which more than 2,000 participants from the least developed and developing countries have benefited. Indonesia is also proud to host the first Indonesia-Africa Forum in April of 2018, which shows our commitment to strengthening a partnership with Africa towards achieving sustainable development.

Synergy between sustaining peace and the development agenda requires a society that is just and inclusive and fully respects human rights. There should be no more man-made humanitarian crises in the world. Indonesia shares the concern of the international community regarding the developments in Rakhine state. We have proposed a 4+1 formula to the Government of Myanmar, placing the needs and welfare of the people at its centre. It would first require restoring stability and security. Its second tenet is restraint and non-violence. Third is to provide protection to all people in Rakhine state. Fourth is immediate access to humanitarian assistance. We also wish to implement the recommendations of the team led by Kofi Annan.

That is why a people-centred Government must be at the heart of national development programmes. That is why Indonesia continues to strengthen democracy and good governance at all levels. Over the past 10 years, through the Bali Democracy Forum, Indonesia has also shared the experiences and best practices of its democracy, working to strengthen democracy in its wider region.

Furthermore, development must not be achieved at the expense of the environment. Despite the sceptics, climate change is real. It is happening as we speak. Like

many small island developing States, Indonesia, with more than 17,000 islands, is experiencing changing weather patterns and rising sea levels. That will affect the sustainability of our development and even our survival. Indonesia is therefore fully committed to the Paris Agreement. We call on all countries to implement their obligations under the Agreement.

One of the greatest challenges to our global order and development agenda is the threat of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism. The threat is real, imminent and ever-present. Terrorism undermines peace and disrupts development. Therefore, my third point concerns the urgent need for global action and partnership in combating terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism. The key to tackling terrorism is to address its root causes: extreme poverty, illiteracy and massive youth unemployment. In most cases, radicalism and terrorism take hold of young, angry men, who think they have no hope because their country is destroyed, in combination with authoritarian Governments and invasions of big countries.

In Indonesia, we have adopted a comprehensive approach to addressing terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism in the form of a seamless combination of using hard and soft powers and strengthening law enforcement and the rule of law. At the same time, we are fostering engagement with communities through education, empowerment and interfaith and cultural dialogue. Indonesia has also implemented a comprehensive programme for the deradicalization and reintegration of those who have been radicalized or gone to the dark side. We have deradicalized more than 1,600 extremists in over 72 prisons in Indonesia. In this digital age of social media, terrorism is like cancer; it spreads quickly and it is deadly. No one country can address it in isolation. Global cooperation and a comprehensive approach are the only panacea to eradicate the threat.

As global challenges become more complex, it is evident that unilateralism is not a sustainable solution. The world needs strong partnership — a true global partnership. Indonesia has long believed in such partnership. That belief stems from our embedded national slogan "*Bersatu kita teguh bercerai kita runtuh*", which translates as "united we stand, divided we fall". Indonesia has always desired to contribute to global partnership, global peace and security, and global prosperity. Indonesia has presented its candidacy for non-permanent membership of the Security Council for the term 2019-2020. Indonesia is a true partner for world peace. We are counting on the support of those present for our candidacy.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Crown Prince Abdullah II: I am honoured today to speak on behalf of His Majesty King Abdullah II and the people of Jordan. I bring Jordan's sincere congratulations on the election of President Lajčák and our commitment to the work of the General Assembly. To Secretary-General Guterres, I extend my country's great appreciation for his partnership with our people.

Two years ago, I had the chance to advocate on behalf of my generation and to chair a delegation that participated in the work leading to the adoption of the first Security Council resolution on youth. Our joint efforts resulted in the historic, unanimous adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, aimed at empowering young people to participate in peace processes and dispute resolution.

Today, I stand before the Assembly not only as a representative of my beloved Jordan, but also as a member of the largest generation of young people in history. Like every other generation, we have inherited the collective wisdom and values of our elders. And like others before us, we must often struggle to

reconcile them with our reality today. What that reality is is unprecedented.

Ours is a world at an epic intersection, driven by the confluence of deepened globalization and disruptive technologies. We are at the brink of a fourth industrial revolution that is redefining how we function as societies and how we relate to one another as human beings. Our hyperconnected world is at once bringing people closer together and widening the divisions among them.

Amid all that, the young people of my generation are asking: what are the values that anchor global citizenship today? In which direction does our collective moral compass point, and can it guide us safely to justice, prosperity and peace for all? Too often, people of my generation are labelled dreamers, yet we all know that every great deed was born a dream. We are often dismissed as idealists, but idealism is not foolish; it is fearless. It invigorates us to lift our reality to the level of our higher ideals, and not to compromise our ideals in the face of adversity.

So I humbly ask those present to indulge me as I try, on behalf of my generation, to sharpen the contours of our foggy terrain and put forward some rudimentary questions that are unfettered by the political decorum that I know I will acquire with time. I will use my country, Jordan, as a launchpad for those thoughts and questions, as I believe they are a true embodiment of what is so right and yet so wrong with our world today.

Throughout its history, Jordan has suffered external shock after external shock, but the past couple of decades have been relentless. We are currently bordered by a number of conflicts. Over the years, there have been wars in Gaza, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, and there are worsening prospects for peace in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Jordan has also had to weather the global financial crisis and the energy crises.

All that has affected us in very real and felt ways. Our largest export market, Iraq, was completely shut off. Trade with Syria came to a halt, and we lost critical trade routes from Europe and Turkey. Despite our best efforts, regional instability has undermined tourism and investment. I do not know of any other country in recent history that has gone through such an onslaught of crises and found itself surrounded by so many conflicts through no fault of its own.

And it does not stop there. My country — a resource-poor nation in a conflict-rich region — is host to 1.3 million Syrian refugees, in addition to millions of Palestinian refugees and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, as well as others from Libya and Yemen. Jordan today is one of the largest hosts of refugees in the world. The direct cost of the Syria crisis now consumes more than a quarter of our budget. Its ripple effects are felt across local communities, where 90 per cent of Syrian refugees live. Housing, food, energy, health care, education and jobs are all under pressure.

Yet in the face of those daunting challenges, we did not back down from our ideals or values. We did not turn our backs on people in need. We are weighed down by massive debt, yet we stand tall and proud. Our soldiers dodge bullets to let refugees into our country, not to keep them out. Nor did we falter in our reform efforts, difficult as some of them have been on our people. On the contrary, the heavier our burden became, the more forcefully we forged ahead.

Please do not misunderstand me; we are not perfect. To bring down unemployment and create the jobs needed for youth and future generations, we need to drastically improve our investment climate; enhance integrity and accountability; advance our education system; and support young entrepreneurs. Ordinarily, assistance would be tied to our progress. But these are extraordinary times, and aid is a necessary runway if our political and economic reforms are to fully take off.

Difficult circumstances did not stop Jordan from being a net contributor to global good. We have remained steadfast in our commitment to a just and peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the two-State solution, despite prevailing scepticism. We have staunchly upheld our duty as Hashemite custodians of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Preserving the historical and legal status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif is key to peace in our region and the world, as Jerusalem is the cradle of all three monotheistic religions.

We have been unwavering in the international war against terrorism and our promotion of the true values of Islam. Our peacekeeping troops have protected innocent civilians from Haiti to Darfur to East Timor; and our calls for inclusiveness and moderation ring loud in a region too often deafened by division and extremism. We have done the right thing, over and over again, because that is what real integrity means.

But how has the world reacted? No doubt, Jordan is regularly praised for its humanitarian and moral stance, and we are proud of our country's reputation. But kind words do not balance budgets, build schools or bolster employment. For the people and youth of Jordan, important questions linger. How can it be that a country as small as ours struggles in the face of such crushing adversity, only to be told that its friends are suffering from donor fatigue? Financial institutions often remind us that on a per capita basis, we are a top recipient of aid. Yet, on a per capita basis, few countries have endured as many external shocks or contributed to global peace and security as Jordan has.

How can it be that a country like Jordan offers a humble home to millions of desperate people, while richer countries around the world quibble over accepting thousands? What does it say about our common humanity when last year alone the world spent close to $1.7 trillion on arms, but fell short by less than $1.7 billion in fulfilling the United Nations appeal to support Syrian refugees and host communities in countries like Jordan? What does it say when trillions are spent waging wars in our region, but little to take our region to safer shores?

There are no good answers. The sad reality is that war economies are thriving to the benefit of a few, while real economies are suffering to the detriment of all. The message to the youth of Jordan and our region is loud and clear: there is no shortage of money for fighting evil, but the appetite for rewarding virtue is nearly non-existent; that the voice of those who defend and build is drowned out by those who attack and destroy. It just does not add up. So, what do we tell the people of Jordan? What does the international community tell our young majority? Do we tell them that the values we live by are of no value? That pragmatism beats principles? That complacency trumps compassion? Or that we should play it safe; turn our backs on people in need, because we cannot count on others to have our back?

The United Nations is our global conscience, but for too many in my country, and others around the world trying to do good, it sometimes feels like the world's conscience is on silent mode. It is time to break the silence and start finding answers. In doing so, we can unleash a global current that carries our common humanity to safer shores. Our commitment to peace, moderation and international cooperation is uncompromising. Water a thirsty fruit-bearing tree or continue to add fuel to a raging fire? The world has a choice to make.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for the statement he just made.

Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): Next week, on 1 October, Tuvalu will mark the thirty-ninth anniversary of its independence. It gives me great pleasure, therefore, on behalf of the Government and people of Tuvalu, to thank the United Nations and all its membership for granting Tuvalu the recognition of full sovereignty in October 1978.

Twenty-two years later, on the eve of the twenty-first century in September 2000, Tuvalu was admitted as the 189th Member of the United Nations, with the rights of full participation as a member of the United Nations family. Our joining the United Nations is a journey of hope — hope in the noble values of this great body, the United Nations, and trust in its ability to assure humankind, including small and vulnerable countries like mine, peace, security and prosperity for our survival.

I record Tuvalu's sincere gratitude to the United Nations and its specialized agencies, development partners — especially our traditional partners in the Pacific, regional bodies of the Pacific — friends in Asia, India, South Korea, Japan, the Republic of China, the European Union and others, for all their support to my island nation of Tuvalu. We welcome the friendship and partnership of United Nations Members and other entities as we move forward.

Tuvalu applauds the theme of the seventy-second general debate, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet". It captures the undeniable linkage between peace, security and sustainable development. It underscores that, without peace and security, our 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not deliver a fair globalization for all. In short, without sustainable development, there will be no peace and no security.

I congratulate Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election to the presidency and on his vision of focusing on people during the seventy-second session. I also congratulate the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji, on his efforts and outstanding leadership on many fronts.

I want to express the deepest sympathy of Tuvalu, as a small and vulnerable island nation, to the people of the United States of America and the Caribbean islands who are suffering or have been affected by the destruction caused by the recent hurricanes and tropical cyclones in that region. These unfortunate events clearly show the magnitude and urgency of global work still required of the United Nations to better prepare, protect and save peoples and humanity from such calamities.

We also share the devastating grief of the people of Mexico, including young schoolchildren, following the earthquake this week, as well as other peoples suffering similar disasters and violence around the world. We pray that God brings comfort and a speedy recovery to the affected people and their loved ones.

Horrific acts of violence and terrorism continue to plague our world. Countless innocent lives are destroyed and lost. Violence in any form is a direct threat to peace and security and seriously undermines our efforts to achieve sustainable development. We therefore condemn violence and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations.

We are particularly concerned with the threat to global peace and security posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We acknowledge the persistent efforts of the Security Council to de-escalate tensions. A renewed engagement with inclusive diplomatic dialogue is, in our view, the only option for solving the crisis on the Korean peninsula. We believe that a military response would lead to unimaginable destruction and loss of life.

In this vein, Tuvalu maintains its commitments in support of all international legal instruments against violence and terrorism. It is critical that we support international law for the protection and promotion of human rights. We commend the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism to ensure the effective and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Just yesterday, and with pride on behalf of my country, Tuvalu, I signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a further demonstration of our commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and to the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty, which was negotiated and drafted at the 1984 Pacific Island Leaders Forum, held in Tuvalu. It is our fervent hope that nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including the trade in materials and the development of technologies to produce such weapons, are totally banned, outlawed and prohibited worldwide by the United Nations. Humankind must be advanced neither on the principles of fear and deterrence nor on the adage of "might is right", but rather on moral justice for humankind, equity, trust, respect and the full enjoyment of basic human rights.

The entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change last year raised our hopes that, in recognizing the existential threat to us all, Member States would commit to the common cause of fighting climate change, adapting to its impacts and strengthening the ability of developing States, especially the most vulnerable, to deal with them. The Paris Agreement is our common hope of a decent life on a sustainable planet. For Tuvalu, it is our hope of security and survival.

This hope, however, dimmed with the announcement by the United States that it will abandon the Paris Agreement. This decision risks undermining our global efforts to save and protect the livelihoods of the people who are at risk from the impacts of climate change. These are the marginalized, the vulnerable, the poor, the women and the children who suffer the most from climate change, especially those who live on low-lying islands and incoastal areas. There are already tens of millions of these people, and their number is increasing at an alarming rate.

Domestic, economic and political interests are often short-term and benefit only a few. They should not be pursued at the expense of a decent life for us

all, current and future generations, on a sustainable planet. That is the spirit that underpins our twenty-first-century development system. We therefore urge the United States to reunite with us and to allow all of us, in particular the most vulnerable, the best possible chance to save ourselves and the sustainable future of humankind. We are nevertheless encouraged this morning by the strong leadership of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and French President Emmanuel Macron on climate change. We thank them and highly commend their courage.

We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to convene a dedicated climate summit in 2019 to mobilize political support. It will be an important opportunity, in our view, to review our progress and momentum and, most importantly, to enhance our commitment to taking urgent and credible actions to reverse global warming. We are also encouraged by the Secretary-General's commitment to intensifying high-level political engagement to limit the temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and aiming at limiting the increase to 1.5°C. We are likewise heartened by his dedication to rallying the United Nations system to better support Member States by mobilizing resources and strengthening partnerships in their pursuit of climate action.

Indeed, without enhanced commitment and genuine partnerships, the Paris Agreement will not save us all, especially the most vulnerable. Climate change is a risk multiplier on all factors of development. Its challenges are complex and continue to change. It is for this reason that we reiterate our call for the appointment of a special representative on climate change and security in order to enhance international focus, coordination and commitment. In the same vein, we call for climate change and security to be a permanent item on the agenda of the Security Council, given its direct threat to global peace and security.

For Tuvalu and many of the low-lying islands, our peace and security are not imperilled by traditional threats of conflict, violence, drugs, weapons, famine or disease. Instead, as the Male' Declaration on the Human Dimension of Climate Change recognized in 2007, "the impacts of climate change pose the most immediate, fundamental and far-reaching threat" to individuals and communities in these most vulnerable States and threaten a wide range of human rights, including

> "the right to life, the right to take part in cultural life, the right to use and enjoy property, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to food and the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".

Ten years ago we recognized that climate change was the single greatest major threat to our peace, security and, ultimately, survival. It remains so today, and the situation grows more urgent every day. Under current warming trends, our islands may be submerged under the sea within the next 50 years. If and when that happens, we will be forced to abandon our islands, even though we contribute the least to global warming and sea-level rise. This forced relocation or displacement of our people is an injustice and an infringement on our fundamental and basic human rights.

It is for this very reason that we continue to call for enhanced global commitment and partnerships in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. We cannot give up on this campaign, for two very simple reasons. First, relocation and statelessness are totally unacceptable, as many of us here in the Hall would agree. Secondly, we all know that membership of our global family of the United Nations has the tools and resources to save Tuvalu and low-lying States from the impacts of climate change. It is only a question of whether we have the will and the courage to help these people.

We have come together to face grave risks before. Over many years, the international community, guided by the Charter of the United Nations, has cooperated on many fronts to deal with threats such as Ebola, cholera, violence, natural disasters and, subsequently, the lives and rights of people displaced by such threats. The international response was immediate because these threats were potential global threats to humankind. For others, however, their response was driven by political and economic interests. Sadly, displacement owing to the impacts of climate change has not drawn the same international concern and response, despite the fact that it has the very real potential to become a serious threat to global peace, security and human rights.

Uncontrolled mass migration into Europe as a result of conflicts and natural disasters, for example, has taught us the very important lesson that we should have had in place effective international institutions and systems to control, manage and protect the rights of migrants. In exactly the same manner, we must now formulate effective international systems to protect

the human rights of people displaced by the impacts of climate change and avoid further uncontrolled mass migration and mass violation of human rights.

This preparation must include developing the appropriate international legal tools to cope with the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. In particular, the current refugee regimes that were developed to cope with traditional threats do not adequately protect people forced to leave their homes by the impacts of climate change. We therefore reiterate our proposal for a United Nations resolution on the establishment of a legal process to protect the human rights and, ultimately, save the lives of people displaced by the impacts of climate change.

As a least developed country (LDC) and a small island developing State (SIDS), we need enhanced global support to overcome the structural challenges we face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On our own part, Tuvalu has developed its national strategy for sustainable development, known as Te Kakeega III, premised on building resilience through good governance, inclusive participation and capacity measures for mitigation for LDCs, with targets of 100 per cent renewable energy by 2020, as well as coastal protection adaptation on all islands, in order to protect and save Tuvalu.

We are grateful to the members of the international community for their generous support through the work of the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as through other donors and bilateral partners. While grateful for their goodwill, we have established our own Tuvalu Climate Change and Disaster Survival Fund as a facility to help people respond quickly to the impacts of climate change.

To enhance further adaptation work, access to appropriate infrastructures, maritime ports on the islands, airports, technology connectivity, health care, quality education and renewable energy are critical areas of particular priority. Tuvalu will welcome the development of genuine and durable partnerships, as aspired to under the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway.

In regard to the issue of LDC graduation, it is our view that a country must graduate only when it can achieve sustainable development, not merely when it should be able to achieve it. The unique vulnerability of SIDS and LDCs such as Tuvalu must be the central criteria of consideration for LDC graduation.

As small islands surrounded by vast oceans, we interact with the ocean every day of our lives. We are heavily dependent on the ocean, and the ocean is central to our achievement of sustainable development. We firmly believe that once we have established our baselines under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, these baselines, as well as the identified maritime zones, shall remain forever. This is irrespective of sea-level rise.

The ongoing discussions on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction must ensure that small island developing States, with our particular vulnerabilities, are provided the necessary financial and technical support to guarantee our equal and fair participation in the management and sharing of benefits from this instrument. We must agree at this session of the Assembly to commence work on developing a legally binding agreement to give protection to biodiversity beyond national jurisdictions.

Our 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is universal and holistic in that it applies to all countries and actors and covers all aspects of sustainable development. Critically to its success, the agenda is rooted in human rights and genuine partnerships. But the vibrant democracy of Taiwan, which has long been an active and responsible development partner to many countries, including Tuvalu, is being denied participation in the United Nations system. It cannot be right that the twenty-second-largest global economy, with a notable capacity to contribute, cannot effectively participate in our 2030 Agenda. This is unfortunate, given that our 2030 Agenda needs genuine global partnerships to mobilize all available resources to be successful. Under its principle of universality, the United Nations should allow the 23 million people of Taiwan to enjoy their fundamental right to participate fully in the United Nations system and to benefit and contribute effectively to its programmes.

In the same vein, the people of Cuba must be allowed to freely exercise their rights to determine their own political, economic and social systems. With their rights and trade restricted by the unilateral blockade imposed by the United States, the people of Cuba are denied effective participation in our Sustainable Development Goals programmes.

Of similar concerns, the people of West Papua should be enabled to exercise their fundamental right, with the intervention of this responsible Organization, to determine their own development aspirations and future. The West Papuans are a distinct people with Pacific roots, with their own land, history and culture. The violation of human rights in West Papua is a matter of constant and great concern to us. Tuvalu strongly believes that the United Nations must engage in setting a clear pathway to address these issues and the issue of self-determination for the people of West Papua.

We must embrace the genuine partnership of those who can contribute to the realization of a decent life in our marginalized communities. We cannot ignore and risk leaving behind those who hope for a decent life but are being constrained by violence, natural disasters, violation of human rights, atrocities and the impacts of climate change. We cannot leave anyone behind.

Finally, I wish to express Tuvalu's strong support for a global pact on the environment, as initiated and proposed by France. We need an internationally legally binding agreement that protects our rights to a safe and clean environment. We are but on one big canoe for humankind and, as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said this morning (see A/72/PV.12), no one country has the right to jump ship on climate change. We must either paddle together to keep the canoe afloat and safe, or allow the canoe to sink and drown. It is our hope that, with this global pact on the environment and the Paris Agreement, we can save Tuvalu. If we can save Tuvalu, we can save the world.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Tuvalu for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A/72/PV.14

General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

14th plenary meeting
Thursday, 21 September 2017, 6.25 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.25 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Georgia.

Mr. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Kvirikashvili (Georgia): At the outset, let me express my deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims of the natural disasters that have affected North America over the past several days, including the hurricanes that have devastated Caribbean island nations and parts of the United States and the earthquakes that have impacted Mexico. We convey our solidarity to the Governments and the peoples of those nations during these difficult times. No country, including Georgia, is immune from natural disasters. Solidarity is what strengthens nations when addressing such severe challenges.

My fellow countrymen share with me the honour of addressing the General Assembly today, because the message that I have been entrusted to deliver is one that they understand in their bones, having personally experienced it, lived it and embraced it. That message — their message — is straightforward: by putting Georgian citizens at the centre of our strategy, we aim to further strengthen democratic institutions, ensure peace and accelerate economic growth. Those are the essential multipliers for sustainable development, a project that connects us with the region and the world.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Georgia's membership in the United Nations. During that period, we have managed to transform our country from a recipient of United Nations humanitarian aid to a top reformer that was recently elected as Chair of the Open Government Partnership. Georgia brings to that task the same vision that it espouses for itself: putting its citizens at the centre of its priorities. Georgia's chairship of the Open Government Partnership will support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 16, on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

In implementing the SDGs by incorporating them into our national policies, we have seen the need for the institutional reform of the United Nations, and we support the new vision of Secretary-General Guterres as reflected in the Declaration of Support, to which we recently subscribed. When I spoke before the Assembly last year (see A/71/PV.13), Georgia was heading into

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general elections. That resulted in our people entrusting us with increased support to lead the country. The people saw two things. First, they saw that we are committed to making democratic rights and security the key drivers of all our policies. Secondly, they saw that we offer a clear path for further reforms.

Our citizens feel the changes that international institutions have been clearly referring to. Georgia has advanced in all international rankings over the past five years. The Fraser Institute ranks the Georgian economy as the fifth freest in the world. We have come to grips with corruption. The Heritage Foundation ranked Georgia thirty-first in terms of freedom from corruption in 2017, an improvement from its ranking of sixty-ninth in 2012. Transparency International echoed that progress in 2016 by ranking Georgia first in the region in that regard. We have prioritized the protection of property rights. The World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2017* has raised Georgia's ranking by 77 since 2012. We are committed to an independent judiciary. The World Economic Forum ranks Georgia at sixty-third in that regard, an increase in rankings of 28. In the critical area of law enforcement and physical security, the World Bank ranks Georgia twenty-sixth with respect to combating organized crime, an increase in rankings of 41.

We are not making merely cosmetic changes. We promised our people that we would introduce a parliamentary system and improve our Constitution so as to conform to the best European standards. In addition to addressing numerous contradictions in the current Constitution, the new draft introduces many new progressive initiatives, such as the right to physical integrity, the rights of persons with disabilities, the right to access to the Internet, environmental protections and many more that are in line with the recommendations of the European Commission for Democracy through Law, also know as the Venice Commission. Those commitments reflect Georgians' aspirations to attain full membership in the European Union and NATO. Georgians understand that to be their destiny, as Georgia has long been an integral part of Europe's broad cultural and historical tapestry.

In parallel with constitutional reform, we began implementing our four-point economic reform plan aimed at ensuring quick economic growth. We launched an ambitious education reform in order to facilitate links between the educational system and industry and develop demand-based higher and professional education and enhance the economic skills and capacity of the labour force.

Living in an innovative society is a key to success for our talented young people. We are further investing in our national ecosystem and in integrating it into the global one so as to open doors and build bridges connecting our innovators with world markets.

Prudent macroeconomic policy has been the foundation of our success in the region's turbulent economic environment. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report has advanced Georgia by 97 places in the rankings since 2012. This month, Moody's upgraded the sovereign credit rating of Georgia to Ba2, acknowledging that Georgia has successfully overcome the regional shock of 2014-2016.

In order to increase incentives to invest in Georgia, we have implemented a bold taxation reform, which includes abolishing the profit tax on undistributed earnings and liberalizing the tax administration system. We anticipate up to 5 per cent economic growth this year, rising to 7 per cent and higher in the coming years.

We are committed to upgrading Georgia's infrastructure. That is important in order for Georgia to realize its geostrategic aim of serving as a hub for doing business in the region, connecting East and West. Upgrading our infrastructure is essential so as to ensure the rapid delivery of services, achieve efficiency in tourism and logistics, and effectively take goods to market. We see that as a powerful way to create employment that pulls people out of poverty. We have agreed to a multi-year programme with the International Monetary Fund and have secured financing for projects worth several billion dollars from international financial organizations.

Georgia, like Ukraine and Moldova, has signed an Association Agreement with a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreement with the European Union (EU) and has secured visa-free travel to the EU. At the same time, Georgia has become the first country in the region to sign a free-trade agreement with China. On the one hand, we are integrating into the EU internal market and, on the other hand, we are bringing Asian markets closer to us. That enables Georgia to use the full potential of its free trade networks as part of one of the most exciting development ventures of our time.

We are contributing to the One Belt, One Road project, which will facilitate trade in high-value

goods and services between Europe and Asia, cutting significant time from the length of traditional seaborne transport around the peripheries of Eurasia. Asia and Europe will meet in that grand adventure through the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project, which we are implementing together with our Turkish and Azeri partners, and Georgia's new state-of-the-art port on the Black Sea at Anaklia. That deep-water port will be capable of handling the largest container ships, which will result in a multifold increase of Georgia's cargo-transit capacity. Anaklia will be developed by multiple international players and will be operated by a well-known American company.

Georgia is now less than 10 days from East Asia and within five days of any point in Europe. We are creating an efficient multimodal transit infrastructure that will forge links and processes, and will cement relationships among States and people from Europe to Asia. It represents the fundamental connection between building economic stability for Georgian citizens and achieving a more prosperous and peaceful region.

In a world full of challenges — hot and frozen conflicts, State and non-State aggressions — Georgia is no exception. And here, too, we have put our citizens at the centre of our strategy. United Nations Members are well aware that the Russian Federation continues to occupy two historical regions of Georgia's sovereign territory in violation of its many international obligations, including dozens of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Since the beginning of 2017, the Russian Federation has intensified its policy of occupation and factual annexation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia. It has implemented so-called integration treaties and signed so-called agreements with de facto authorities to absorb Georgia's occupied regions into Russia's military, political, economic and social systems. It has also accelerated its military build-up in both of the occupied regions of Georgia. The Russian Federation has intensified the fortification of the occupation lines by installing razor-wire fences, trenches, so-called border signs and other artificial barriers. Families have even endured having razor-wire fences cut through their dwellings and farmyards. Vulnerable groups, such as people in need of medical care and schoolchildren crossing to get an education in their native language, which is prohibited in the occupied regions, have been blocked by closed crossing points. Meanwhile, Russia continues to install motion detectors and other technologies in order to assert full control of all crossings along the occupation line.

Georgia is firmly committed to the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict. The Georgian Government complies with the EU-mediated ceasefire agreement. It has many times reaffirmed its adherence to the legally binding non-use of force. Russia has not reciprocated. Georgia's consistent efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict are reflected in the testimonies of many countries and international organizations. I would like to thank world leaders for addressing the need of accelerating peaceful conflict resolution and for supporting Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty during this general debate.

Every year, the General Assembly adopts a resolution reiterating the right of return of all internally displaced persons and refugees to the occupied regions. Georgians are grateful for the support of the United Nations, but the resolutions have not translated into reality for hundreds of thousands of my compatriots waiting to return to their homes, simply because one State Member of the United Nations refuses to comply with its international obligations.

The Government of Georgia is providing new instruments to rebuild trust with our compatriots living across the occupation line. We are determined to make the benefits of Georgia's European agenda available to the people on the other side of occupation line. Our substantial package of initiatives for those under occupation include providing opportunities for trans-administrative borderline trade and access to Georgia's free trade opportunities in the global marketplace. We also offer them health care, education and other social benefits.

Despite the challenges we face, Georgia is a significant contributor to Euro-Atlantic security. Our strategic partnership with the United States has proved to be key for our development and stability, and we are committed to deepening those ties further. The EU Global Strategy has recognized Georgia's success as a prosperous, peaceful and stable democracy and as a significant contributor in its neighbourhood.

We continue our active participation in international operations, including in Afghanistan and in the European crisis-management operations in the Central African Republic and Mali. In 2014, Georgia became a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and joined three

counter-ISIS working groups on counter-financing, on counter-messaging and on foreign terrorist fighters. Georgia is a party to 14 United Nations counter-terrorism conventions and to the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, and fulfils its commitments in that regard.

Georgia is growing. Georgia is vibrant. Georgia is resilient in the face of challenges. Georgia carries its share of international responsibilities. Georgia is all of those things, because Georgia is its citizens. They are at the centre of our Government's strategy, and that is where they will remain. As we have reached out to the world, the world has come to us. Our citizens are the beneficiaries of greater connectivity to the world. Their economic success is a prerequisite for sustained well-being and prosperity, both at home and well beyond Georgia's borders. I speak today as one steward of our nation, with thanks to all who love and support Georgia.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Georgia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Giorgi Kvirikashvili, Prime Minister of Georgia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Gaston Alphonso Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mr. Gaston Alphonso Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Gaston Alphonso Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Browne (Antigua and Barbuda): On 6 September, my small, two-island State, Antigua and Barbuda, was the victim of the ferocity of Hurricane Irma, the largest storm endured in the Atlantic in human history. The island of Barbuda was decimated, its entire population left homeless and its buildings reduced to empty shells.

Fortunately, Antigua and Barbuda was spared the full blast of Hurricane Maria just nine days later, although sustained winds of up to 60 miles per hour gave us a troubling awareness of the agony visited on the nearby islands of Dominica, Guadeloupe and Puerto Rico. Antigua and Barbuda continued to stay resilient. Having witnessed the devastation of Barbuda and the desolation of its inhabitants after the ravages of Irma, my heart bleeds for the people of the countries that have now been brutalized by Maria, and those that will suffer its cruelty in the coming days.

I have come to the General Assembly because I consider it to be important to speak to the world's representatives and to do so collectively in order to share the experience of my country, as well as the huge challenges faced by the Caribbean islands in general. Barbuda and its inhabitants were among the worst affected by Hurricane Irma in the region. Barbuda has a surface of 62 square miles. When Irma thundered over the island, it was 375 miles wide, with gale force winds of 220 miles per hour. Barbuda did not stand the faintest chance against such size, such ferocity and such intensity. The island was completely destroyed, and my Government was compelled to evacuate all of the inhabitants to Antigua.

For the first time in over 300 years, there are now no permanent residents on Barbuda. The footprints of an entire civilization have been erased by the brutality and magnitude of Irma. Everything that meant anything to the inhabitants had to be left behind — their homes, their possessions, their history, indeed, everything that defines them as a society and as a people. Mercifully, Antigua, the larger of the two islands, suffered no major damage, and it could begin to function normally within 48 hours.

Had that not been the case, how we would have coped is simply beyond imagination. Overnight, Antigua's population increased by almost 3 per cent. I know of no country that could easily cope with such an unplanned, unexpected and unscheduled increase in its population.

In addition to providing shelter, accommodation and basic necessities to the evacuated residents of Barbuda, the social services on Antigua are now under great strain. They struggle to provide school places for an additional 600 students, medical services for the elderly and a means of earning an income for the able-bodied. Naturally, the residents of Barbuda are anxious to return to their homeland. But, as I speak to the Assembly, the island remains unfit for human habitation. There is no electricity or potable water, and

95 per cent of the buildings have been destroyed or severely damaged.

Preliminary estimates have placed the cost of rebuilding Barbuda at about $250 million. That figure represents 15 per cent or more of my country's gross domestic product of approximately $1.5 billion. It is simply a stretch beyond our reach.

The President took the Chair.

Antigua and Barbuda urgently requires the assistance of the international community, including the international development and finance institutions, to accomplish the vital task of rebuilding Barbuda. And I should say that we have not outstretched the palm of our hand because we simply crave; we plead because we need.

Barbuda is not only a natural disaster; it is a humanitarian crisis that now consumes Antigua. Even as my Government and people look forward to the assistance of the better-off nations of the world, I thank those nations and persons who were first responders, particularly the Government and the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who went beyond the call of duty to assist. I also acknowledge the commitment of and contributions from the Government and the people of the People's Republic of China, the Governments of Cuba, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Canada, the Dominican Republic and sister States of the Caribbean Community, who gave generously from the little they have. That includes Dominica, which, in one wretched night, lost a significant number of precious lives and years of hard-earned development under the unrelenting battering of Hurricane Maria.

On Antigua, Barbudans are being cared for as best we can with our very limited resources. But as the period of care lengthens, not only do the conditions worsen but the cost also increases, forcing my Government to borrow money on commercial terms at high interest rates and swelling our already burdensome national debt.

The present international financial architecture is leaving small States such as mine behind. Whatever position on climate change a nation may take, the evidence of global warming is now irrefutably stronger. Two Category 5 hurricanes within 12 days, which unrelentingly pounded so many countries, can no longer be dismissed as vagaries of the weather, nor can they be explained as Nature's doing. Hurricanes are stronger and bigger because they are absorbing moisture from seas that are increasingly warmer as a result of global warming.

And that is a man-made phenomenon, attributable to those nations that consume 80 per cent or more of the world's primary energy, emitting dangerous levels of pollution into the atmosphere. All 14 Caribbean Community countries together produce less than 0.1 per cent of global emissions. We are the least of the polluters but the largest of the casualties. The unfairness, injustice and inequality of the situation are painfully obvious.

If such frequent and brutal storms are to be withstood, Caribbean islands and certain parts of the United States need to construct more resilient buildings and infrastructure than now exists. That means that the international development and financial institutions need to provide financing at concessionary rates without artificial impediments. If that does not happen, the subsequent cost in lives and property is too frightening to contemplate.

Increasingly, States such as mine are victims of an international economic and financial system that regards us merely as a numerical statistic or a mere nuisance. We are measured by the level of our income, even though it is an insufficient and unreasonable criterion for establishing vulnerability, poverty and need. Like many other small island States, my developing country is categorized as high-income, thus denying it access to concessional financing and grant funding from international financial institutions and donor Governments.

It is patently obvious that the per-capita income criterion is a skewed and flawed determinant. It should be eliminated and eliminated immediately. Because we are small economies with inadequate domestic capital formation, our countries open our doors to foreign investment, granting significant tax concessions so as to attract investments and help provide jobs to curb poverty. The consequence is that a small percentage of persons in our community, mostly expatriates, at the top end of businesses earn the largest percentage of high incomes and the mass of the population earns considerably less. In addition, Government tax revenues are significantly reduced owing to the investment concessions granted. It is time that those who control the levers of power in the economic and financial international community acknowledged that

the per-capita system of measurement is discriminatory and resolved to change it. It is time that that particular swamp be drained, and now is the time for action.

In the United States, where the United Nations is located and the Assembly is gathered today, one of its early leaders, Abraham Lincoln, declared at a critical time in its history that this country could not survive "half slave and half free". He may have been speaking specifically of America and of the disunity that gripped it at the time, but he was talking about more than immorality. He was also talking about social and economic justice. Lincoln's observation is compellingly relevant to social and economic justice in the world today. Injustice and inequality breed instability. The world cannot survive with the wealthy few controlling 90 per cent of global resources. If so, its centre will not hold. Its centre will not hold if the inequality between rich and poor nations increases. It will not be stable until social and economic justice prevails.

My country and citizens do not want to beg for a living. We want to work for it. We want to earn our way, but we cannot do so if the international system refuses to provide us with the means and the tools to build our future. Access to concessional financing represents an imperative need that would give us a great leap forward. It would take us out of the spiral of debt that we are incurring owing to our repeated need to rebuild after disasters with high-cost commercial money. Where is the justice in that? In large wealthy countries borrowing occurs in capital markets at 3 per cent per annum while the so-called high-income small island States are forced to borrow commercially at 12 per cent per annum to repeatedly rebuild infrastructure damaged by hurricanes. Where is the justice in that? It is irrational and punitive to graduate a small island State that cannot pay its debts to high-income status, thereby precluding it from much-needed development financing.

The theme of the Assembly's general debate is "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet". That is all my people and the people of small island States want — peace and a decent life on a planet that is sustainable. We deserve nothing less, and we expect nothing less. It is in that connection that I draw attention to the fact that even in the midst of our present crisis, Antigua and Barbuda is faced with demands from a Paris Club group of wealthy countries for the settlement of $130 million in debts incurred four decades ago because concessional financing was and is still denied to us. It would be of enormous help in dealing with the plight that we now face and the daunting task of rebuilding Barbuda at a cost upwards of $250 million if those wealthy Paris Club countries would forgive or at least reduce significantly the debt that now weighs so heavily on our shoulders. It should be noted that the amount outstanding constitutes primarily accrued interest. Such a step would provide us with the fiscal space to borrow as we seek to garner every cent to recover and rebuild from Hurricane Irma and to give our people a chance to achieve a decent life in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals.

In that same context, my small country won a trade dispute with the United States in 2004 before the World Trade Organization. That trade violation led to significant revenue losses to my country and to greater unemployment among my people. It has been 13 long years since that judgement and seven years since the final appeal by the United States resulted in a final ruling in my country's favour, and yet the United States has failed to settle. The loss of trade revenues to my small country has risen to more than $200 million. Our Government has laboured unsuccessfully for more than 13 years to reach an amicable and reasonable settlement with the United States. That is a classic case where might is right and where the rights of a small, powerless State have been trampled on.

I should mention that over the past 13 years the United States has enjoyed a trade surplus with my small country of more than $2 billion — I repeat, $2 billion. I am well aware that the prolongation of a settlement of the judgement in question is not the making of the present United States Administration, which inherited it. But in the interest of fairness, justice and good conscience, it would be beneficial to my nation in this hour of great need for the United States Government to settle that case.

In this very Hall two days ago, President Trump said of the United States,

> "[W]e can no longer be taken advantage of or enter into a one-sided deal where the United States gets nothing in return" (*A/72/PV.3, p. 11*).

His observation, which I welcome, is equally true for the relationship with Antigua and Barbuda. Honouring its obligations to Antigua and Barbuda is not a one-sided deal in which the United States gets nothing in return, because ultimately 90 per cent of the settlement proceeds will be spent in the United States economy, as our primary source market. The United States is the

greatest beneficiary of trade with my country and has been so year after year for many decades. Settling with us for more than 13 years of trade losses would take less than one year of the trade surplus that the United States' $20 trillion economy has with Antigua and Barbuda's mere $1 billion economy.

In the past few days the experience of the Caribbean islands has shown that entire ancient communities can be snuffed out overnight and the quality of their life suddenly and irreversibly set back. I remind members that for the first time in more than 300 years there is no permanent human resident on Barbuda. But my Government is determined to rebuild Barbuda, however long it takes and with whatever resources we can muster. We are determined that no Caribbean society will be extinguished and that the Caribbean nations will remain firmly on the global map. But even as we resolve, with limited means, to keep our societies alive and vibrant, we call on the international community to acknowledge its obligation to humankind and all peoples, without whom its own societies cannot prosper and will not thrive. In the words of the poet John Donne,

> "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee".

As citizens of planet Earth, let us acknowledge our common humanity and work in harmony to make our world a better place.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Gaston Alphonso Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Abbasi (Pakistan): I would first like to convey the deepest sympathies of the people and the Government of Pakistan to the people of Mexico, who have been affected by the recent earthquake, and all of those affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Let me then congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I am confident that your long experience in public service and international relations will be an asset in successfully guiding the Assembly to address the imposing challenge of security, development and governance that confront the world today.

For over 70 years, despite the Cold War, the nuclear arms race and scores of regional conflicts, our world has been able to avoid a global conflagration. That can be ascribed largely to the adherence by most States to the prohibition of the use or threat of use of force, except under the authority of the Charter of the United Nations.

Unfortunately, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations have been progressively eroded in the new millennium. In recent years, some countries have displayed a growing proclivity to resort to unilateral force and intervention against other States. Coercion and threats have emerged once again as the main currency in the management of inter-State disputes and differences. Renewed East-West tensions may engulf Europe in another Cold War. Peace and prosperity in Asia are threatened by emerging great Power friction and rising tensions in South, East and West Asia.

The Middle East is racked by war and violence in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere. Although Da'esh appears to have been weakened in Iraq and Syria, terrorist violence has spread and intensified across the Middle East and Africa and other parts of the world. There is no end in sight to the tragedy of Palestine. Israel's prolonged occupation and the expansion of illegal settlements may lead to renewed and wider violence in the holy land.

The legitimate struggle for self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir continues to be brutally suppressed by India's occupation forces. Rising racism and religious hatred, manifested in xenophobia and Islamophobia, is erecting physical walls and psychological barriers among nations and peoples, even as our world becomes increasingly interdependent.

The ethnic cleansing of the Rohingyas is not just an affront to all norms of humanity but also challenges our collective conscience.

While the pillars of world order are being eroded, the imperative of international cooperation — the need to address poverty, disease, climate change, nuclear proliferation, terrorism and forced displacement — is intensifying. Today, more than ever, we need the United Nations to provide the parameters, processes and platforms for global cooperation, which is essential if we are to address the wide-ranging challenges to peace, security and development.

Pakistan welcomes the efforts launched by Secretary-General António Guterres to revitalize the United Nations capabilities in peace and security, development and management. We are also committed to a reform that transforms the Security Council into a more representative, democratic and accountable organ, rather than an expanded club of the powerful and the privileged.

Pakistan celebrated the seventieth anniversary of its independence last month. This month marks the seventieth anniversary of Pakistan's membership in the United Nations. Pakistan's commitment to the principles of the United Nations is evident from the long record of its constructive role in the initiatives and contributions that have shaped the decisions and discourse at the world Organization with regard to decolonization, development, trade, international law, human rights, refugees, peacekeeping, security, disarmament and United Nations budget and management.

Pakistan has consistently been one of the world's top troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping. We will remain on the front lines of peacekeeping and continue to offer professional and well-trained personnel to the United Nations, despite our own security challenges.

Our adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations flows from the declaration of our founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who said that our foreign policy was one of friendliness and goodwill towards all nations of the world.

Unfortunately, from day one of its creation, Pakistan has faced unremitting hostility from its eastern neighbour. India refuses to implement the unanimous resolutions of the Security Council, which mandate a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to freely decide their destiny. Instead, India has deployed nearly 700,000 troops in occupied Kashmir to suppress the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiris to exercise their right to self-determination. That represents the most intense foreign military occupation in recent history. As in the past, the Kashmiri people today are waging a heroic and popular struggle to rid themselves of India's oppressive rule. They come out in the streets daily to call on India to leave Jammu and Kashmir.

India has responded with massive and indiscriminate force to suppress the Kashmiris, shooting indiscriminately at children, women and youth. Hundreds of innocent Kashmiris have been killed or injured, and shotgun pellets have blinded and maimed thousands of Kashmiris, including children. Those and other brutalities clearly constitute war crimes and violate the Geneva Conventions.

Pakistan demands that an international investigation be conducted into India's crimes in occupied Kashmir. We ask that the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights send an inquiry commission to occupied Kashmir to verify the nature and extent of India's human rights violations, secure the punishment of those responsible and provide justice and relief to the victims.

Pakistan also urges the international community to call on India to halt pellet-gun attacks and other violence against unarmed demonstrators, stop the use of rape as an instrument of State policy, end media blackouts, rescind its draconian emergency laws and free all Kashmiri political leaders. To divert the world's attention from its brutalities, India frequently violates the ceasefire along the Line of Control in Kashmir. Despite more than 600 violations since January, Pakistan has acted with restraint, but if India ventures across the Line of Control, or acts upon its doctrine of limited war against Pakistan, it will elicit a strong and matching response. The international community must act decisively to prevent the situation from turning into a dangerous escalation.

The Kashmir dispute should be resolved justly, peacefully and expeditiously. As India is unwilling to resume the peace process with Pakistan, we call on the Security Council to fulfil its obligation to secure the implementation of its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir. To that end, the Secretary-General should appoint a Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir.

His mandate should flow from the long-standing but unimplemented relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Let me reiterate that Pakistan remains open to resuming a comprehensive dialogue with India aimed at addressing all outstanding issues, especially Jammu and Kashmir, and discussing measures to maintain peace and security. That dialogue must be accompanied by an end to India's campaign of subversion and State-sponsored terrorism against Pakistan, including from across our western border.

Apart from the people of Afghanistan, Pakistan and its people have suffered the most from four decades of foreign intervention and civil wars in Afghanistan. Those wars have blighted our country with the flow of extremists and terrorists, guns and drugs, as well as an influx of millions of refugees. They have set back our economic development by decades. Even today, Pakistan is host to more than 3 million Afghan refugees. No one desires peace in Afghanistan more than Pakistan. From the 16 years of ongoing war in Afghanistan, it is clear that peace will not be restored by resorting continuously to military force. Kabul, the Coalition and the Afghan Taliban cannot impose a military solution on one another. The international community — as expressed in several United Nations resolutions — has concluded that peace can be restored in Afghanistan only through a negotiated settlement.

Having suffered and sacrificed so much owing to its role in the global counter-terrorism campaign, Pakistan finds it especially galling to be blamed for the military or political stalemate in Afghanistan. We are not prepared to be anyone's scapegoat. Taliban safe havens are located not in Pakistan but in the large tracts of territory controlled by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Yes, cross-border attacks do occur. They are mostly conducted by anti-Pakistan terrorists from safe havens across the border. In order to end all cross-border attacks, we ask the Afghan Government and the Coalition to support and complement Pakistan's ongoing efforts to strengthen border controls and monitor all movement across it.

What Pakistan is not prepared to do is to fight the Afghan war on Pakistan's soil, nor can we endorse any failed strategy that will prolong and intensify the suffering of the people of Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries of the region. Pakistan believes that the urgent and realistic goals in Afghanistan should be: first, to make a concerted effort to eliminate the presence in Afghanistan of Da'esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates, including the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, which was recently declared a terrorist organization by the Security Council; and, secondly, to encourage negotiations between Kabul and the Afghan Taliban — within the framework of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group or any other trilateral format — to reach a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. Those two steps offer the most realistic prospect of restoring peace and stability in Afghanistan and our region.

Pakistan's counter-terrorism credentials cannot be questioned. Following the 9/11 attack on the United States in 2001, it was Pakistani efforts that enabled the decimation of Al-Qaida. Pakistan's military campaigns have succeeded in clearing our tribal areas of almost all militant groups. We took the war to the terrorists. We have paid a heavy price. More than 27,000 Pakistanis, including 6,500 military and law-enforcement personnel, have been martyred by terrorists. Some 50,000 Pakistani nationals have been injured, including 15,000 army personnel, many of whom have lost limbs.

We have fought the war against terror with our own resources. Pakistan's economic losses are estimated at more than $120 billion. Yet we remain fully committed to implementing our national action plan against terrorism and extremism. Defeating terrorist violence is vital to realizing our overriding priority of rapid economic and social development.

Terrorism is now a global phenomenon that must be addressed comprehensively. We see two major gaps in the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

First, the international community has failed to address the issue of State-sponsored terrorism. That is the instrument of choice of the agents of chaos and aspiring hegemons. In several regions, stability will be difficult to restore unless State-sponsored terrorism is condemned, prohibited and punished.

Secondly, in order to eliminate terrorism, its root causes must be addressed, which go beyond poverty and ignorance. Terrorism is rather an extreme response to real or perceived political and/or other grievances, including foreign intervention, oppression and injustice. Unless such root causes are addressed, it will be difficult to counter the twisted narratives of terrorist groups.

Confronted by a hostile and increasingly militarized neighbour, Pakistan has been obliged to maintain its capability for credible deterrence. My country developed nuclear weapons only when they were introduced in our region by that neighbour. Our strategic assets are vital in order to deter the frequent threat of aggression. They are tightly and effectively controlled, as has been widely acknowledged by experts. The world community would be well served by enabling Pakistan to join global non-proliferation arrangements, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group, on a non-discriminatory basis.

Climate change poses a new and existential threat to humankind's future. Extreme climate events are multiplying. Their consequences, such as the flooding in Texas, the landslides in Nepal and Sierra Leone, the devastation wrought by hurricanes in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico, and the disappearance of the Himalayan glaciers, are global and indiscriminate. As one of the States most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, Pakistan believes that it is in our collective interest to pursue and realize the goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and build a new and greener model for growth and development.

Growth and development remain the primary goals of developing countries. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals represent the most ambitious development agenda in history. The development challenge has become even more difficult owing to the combined constraints of climate change, increasing protectionism, the deterioration of international cooperation and the proliferation of conflicts. The vision of shared growth spelled out in Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative offers a solid path to prosperity and a model of South-South cooperation worthy of emulation.

Pakistan's economy has recorded a remarkable revival over the past four years. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will further contribute to our economic upsurge. That will expand exponentially as the Pakistan-China partnership extends beyond energy and transportation to many other sectors. Pakistan's integration into the Eurasian Belt and Road Initiative will provide a firm foundation for Pakistan's rapid economic development. With a youthful population of 207 million people, we are confident that an economic strategy anchored in rising incomes, consumption and production will propel Pakistan towards greater prosperity. To achieve those priority goals for our people, Pakistan seeks to build peace within our country and security around our borders. We seek good relations with all States on the basis of sovereign equality. We will respond positively to all offers of friendship and cooperation.

We are poised at a critical inflection point in history. The world order that has prevented a global war for more than 70 years is under threat. Yet revolutionary advances in science and technology, the immense capacity for global investment, production, consumption and trade, especially in the developing countries, and the availability of structures and mechanisms for collective action offer an opportunity, unprecedented in human history, to address the diverse challenges that we face today. It is here, through the United Nations, that the peoples of the world can seize the opportunities to achieve our shared vision of a more just, peaceful and prosperous world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister for Finance and Economic Development of the Republic of Mauritius

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister for Finance and Economic Development of the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister for Finance and Economic Development of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcome His Excellency Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister for Finance and Economic Development of

the Republic of Mauritius, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Jugnauth (Mauritius): Let me begin by expressing my deepest sympathy and solidarity with the people and the Government of Mexico following the devastating earthquake that has taken the lives of hundreds of men, women and children.

It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly for the first time as the Prime Minister of Mauritius. I am here today to reaffirm my country's continued commitment to the universal values of the Organization.

I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I assure you of our total support as you steer the work of the Assembly. The six priorities that you have identified under the theme of focusing on people echo our own aspirations as a nation.

We extend our warm congratulations to Mr. António Guterres on his appointment as the new Secretary-General. I commend him for the multidimensional vision he has for the United Nations and for the process that he has initiated on the repositioning of the United Nations development system to effectively and efficiently deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We also welcome the consultative process that he has initiated with Member States in that regard. We fully support his initiative and encourage him to make greater use of modern communication technology and of local capacities in the implementation of United Nations-sponsored projects. We also appreciate his view that the reform we seek is but part of a larger reform of the United Nations system, including the revitalization of the role of the General Assembly.

The last time there was a reform of the Security Council was in 1965. That was more than 50 years ago, and Assembly membership then stood at 117. We now have 193 Member States. The Security Council needs to reflect those changes, and that should be done at the earliest. I believe the time has now come for us to proceed with text-based negotiations to be concluded within an agreed time frame. The African Common Position on this matter, which has so far not been challenged, can with appropriate additions provide a basis for such negotiations. Mauritius fully supports the Ezulwini Consensus and Africa's aspiration for a more pronounced role in the Security Council. For far too long, Africa has been left on the side when it comes to global governance. It is time to correct that gross injustice.

We also fully support India's aspiration to a seat on the Security Council. We equally believe that small island developing States (SIDS) must play a more prominent role in the Security Council and that their call for a dedicated non-permanent seat is legitimate and appropriate.

The maintenance of peace and security requires tremendous and constant effort, negotiation, understanding and compromise. Mauritius voted in favour of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last July, and we hope to see complete denuclearization throughout the world. We urge all those involved in potential conflicts around the world, especially where there is a possibility of nuclear weapons being used, to exercise restraint and promote dialogue instead of belligerent posturing, which only feeds unrest and dangerous escalation.

We urge restraint and dialogue in Myanmar, where violence continues to displace thousands of people and has caused numerous victims. We make an appeal for the unrestricted provision of humanitarian assistance to all those affected. We also call for the early implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State with a view to finding a long-lasting solution.

Despite our best efforts, terrorism continues to claim innocent lives and undermine the sovereignty of States. We condemn terrorism in all its forms, wherever they occur, and we stand in solidarity with the Governments and the peoples that are victims of terrorism. We congratulate the Secretary-General on establishing the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. We expect the new Office to provide leadership, coordination and coherence, to strengthen assistance for capacity-building to Member States, and to improve visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts. We also need to address the root causes of that scourge, and we expect the Office to provide valuable input in that regard.

The situation in the Middle East and the plight of the Palestinian people continue to be issues of great concern. We call on all sides to sincerely start talks for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue. Mauritius has always supported a two-State solution, with Palestine and Israel living peacefully side by side.

An independent and viable Palestine is more likely to provide security both to Israel and the region.

Mauritius highly values the importance of its integration within Africa and believes in the universal benefits of the continental integration of Africa. The Agenda 2063 of the African Union, adopted in January 2015, is in consonance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a strategy for development that is people-driven and respectful of the rule of law. That vision of Africa will be carried by its people and youth, and Africa is today home to a growing youthful population and experiencing increased urbanization. Along with the digital transformation of the continent, improving infrastructure and connectivity, and its rich wind, hydro and solar capacity, Africa has the potential of becoming a beacon for sustainable development. It is geared to become a driver of economic growth and a huge consumer market.

In July, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development met to review the status of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda two years after its adoption. I would like to congratulate the 44 countries that presented their voluntary national reviews. In Mauritius, a coordinating mechanism has been set up for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are in the process of consultations with the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders, and we expect to submit our voluntary national review at the next High-level Political Forum, in 2018.

Addressing climate change is central and critical to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. With the increasing number and intensity of climate-related disasters, including storms, droughts and flash floods, it would be naïve on our part to dismiss climate change. We have just recently witnessed the devastating violence of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. I would like to express my Government's deep sympathy to and solidarity with the Governments and the peoples of the islands of the Caribbean and the United States for the lives lost in the devastating trails of those hurricanes.

Mitigating the effects of climate change and effectively implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction will require substantial effort and resources, especially for SIDS, if we want to be more resilient in the aftermath of those natural calamities. Although we welcome the generous pledges made thus far, including the establishment of the Green Climate Fund, we need to streamline and simplify the procedures for SIDS to access those funds, especially in the light of recent events.

This year's High-level Political Forum recognized the specific challenges faced by SIDS and middle-income countries. Classification as a middle-income country renders SIDS such as Mauritius ineligible for most official development assistance (ODA) and concessional funding. Middle-income countries are often victims of their success in graduating from the status of least developed country and run the risk of getting stuck in the middle-income trap. Middle-income SIDS such as Mauritius aspire to be partners in development rather than mere recipients of ODA. With the help of the United Nations development system and other partners, as well as the provision of tailor-made programmes, those countries can contribute to the sharing of experience and knowledge with countries aspiring to graduate from LDC status and consolidate their own economic development at the same time.

Oceans are of vital importance to SIDS. Mauritius, with its exclusive economic zone of more than 2.3 million square kilometres, is a large-ocean State. That is why my Government has developed an ocean strategy covering fisheries, tourism and deep-ocean-water applications, as well as resource exploration and exploitation. We call on our partners to assist us in implementing that strategy, as expressed in paragraph 13 (q) of the Call for Action of the United Nations Ocean Conference.

Mauritius is honoured to co-chair the High-level Panel on Water convened by the former Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank. The Panel met today to take stock of the progress achieved following the adoption of its action plan in September 2016, which called for a transformative approach to the management of water resources. The outcome package of the Panel is expected to make concrete proposals for the achievement of the targets of SDG 6, and we hope that all world leaders will support it.

Adherence to international law, safeguarding fundamental human rights and respect for the territorial integrity of countries underpin relations among countries. With regard to Mauritius, all those principles were flouted when an integral part of its territory, namely, the Chagos Archipelago, was excised prior to its independence, in violation of international law, including obligations reflected in resolutions 1514 (XV),

of 14 December 1960 and 2066 (XX), of 16 December 1965, and all the inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago were forcibly evicted. Our decolonization remains to be completed five decades following the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

A crucial role of the International Court of Justice is to provide guidance through its advisory opinions to the organs and agencies of our Organization for the fulfilment of their responsibilities. It is in that spirit that States members of the Group of African States proposed a resolution in June seeking an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965. We were very pleased that the resolution was adopted, and even more so by the fact that it was by such a resounding majority. That vote demonstrated the great importance that Member States from across the globe — not just in Africa, but also in Europe, Asia and the Americas — attach to the need to complete the process of decolonization, as well as their concern for the injustices caused to the evicted inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago. As a matter of fact, that overwhelming vote has renewed their hope that they might finally return to their place of birth.

The United Nations membership has indeed made it clear that it wishes to see the decolonization process of Mauritius completed, and, to that end, has turned to the International Court of Justice for guidance. We are hopeful that the Court's advisory opinion will not only guide the important work of the General Assembly, but will also allow Mauritius to move forward, including with an appropriate programme in favour of the inhabitants who were displaced from that part of the Mauritian territory. Many members had the opportunity in June to see an exhibition on the tragedy surrounding that eviction and to interact with those who were forced to leave in such inhumane conditions.

We thank Member States for their support and look forward to their continued encouragement as we complete our decolonization. In this regard, we express the hope that as many Member States as possible will contribute to the proceedings in which the Court has invited them to participate.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm that Mauritius has no intention of seeking the disruption of the security arrangements currently in place in Diego Garcia, the largest island of the Chagos archipelago. I would also like to reiterate what successive Mauritian Governments have clearly stated. Mauritius is willing to enter into a long-term renewable lease with the United States to allow these security arrangements to remain in place. In this regard, completing the process of decolonization will enhance security by providing legality and certainty.

With respect to Tromelin, which has always formed and continues to form an integral part of the territory of Mauritius, we welcome the constructive progress made with France, including the agreement reached in 2010.

During this seventy-second session of the General Assembly, we have an opportunity to commit ourselves to agreements and decisions that would considerably improve the lives of ordinary people all around the world. As we prepare to turn this planet over to later generations, I would renew our commitment to striving for a world where peace, security and prosperity do not remain mere distant dreams.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister for Finance and Economic Development of the Republic of Mauritius, for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister for Finance and Economic Development of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and inviting her to address the Assembly.

Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh) (*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*): Mr. President,

let me extend my heartiest felicitations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. My delegation assures you of our full support in discharging your priorities on people, peace and planet.

This is the fourteenth time I address the General Assembly, and this time I have come here with a heavy heart. I have come here just after seeing the hungry, distressed and hopeless Rohingya from Myanmar who have taken shelter in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. This forcibly displaced people of Myanmar are fleeing an ethnic cleansing in their own country, where they have been living for centuries. I can feel their pain because I and my younger sister were refugees for six years after my father, the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and almost all members of my family were assassinated in 1975.

In 1974, in Bangladesh's first-ever address to the General Assembly, my father said,

> "I know that the souls of our martyrs join us in pledging that the Bangalee nation fully commits itself to the building of a world order in which the aspiration of all men for peace and justice will be realized" (*A/PV.2243, para. 2*).

We are currently sheltering more than 800,000 forcibly displaced Rohingya from Myanmar. The ongoing atrocities and human rights violations in the Rakhine state of Myanmar have once again aggravated the situation at the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya from Rakhine state are entering Bangladesh to flee violence. As estimated by the International Organization for Migration, in the past three weeks alone, over 430,000 Rohingya entered Bangladesh. We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying landmines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingya from returning to their country. This people must be able to return to their homeland in safety, security and dignity.

At the same time, I also condemn every kind of terrorism and violent extremism. Our Government maintains a zero-tolerance policy in this regard. I thank the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council for their proactive attempts to stop the atrocities and bring peace and stability to Rakhine state in Myanmar.

I further call on the United Nations and the international community to take immediate and effective measures in order to achieve a permanent solution to this protracted Rohingya crisis. In this regard, I propose the following actions. First, Myanmar must unconditionally, immediately and permanently stop the violence and the practice of ethnic cleansing in Rakhine state. Secondly, the Secretary-General should immediately send a fact-finding mission to Myanmar. Thirdly, all civilians irrespective of religion and ethnicity must be protected in Myanmar. To that end, safe zones could be created inside Myanmar under United Nations supervision. Fourthly, the sustainable return of all forcibly displaced Rohingya in Bangladesh to their homes in Myanmar must be ensured. Fifthly, the recommendations of the Kofi Annan Foundation Advisory Commission report must be immediately and unconditionally implemented in their entirety.

In the 1971 war of liberation against Pakistan, we endured an extreme form of genocide. In the nine-month war, some 3 million innocent people were killed and more than 200,000 women violated. The Pakistani military launched the heinous Operation Searchlight on 25 March, marking the start of the 1971 genocide. This genocide involved the targeted elimination of individuals on the grounds of religion, race and political belief. Intellectuals were brutally killed. To pay homage to the victims of the genocide, our national parliament recently declared 25 March Genocide Day.

In Bangladesh, we have already undertaken the daunting task of bringing the key perpetrators to justice through the International Crimes Tribunal. I urge the international community to take collective action to prevent the recurrence of such heinous crimes as these anywhere anytime. I believe that acknowledging past tragedies such as the 1971 genocide could guide us to achieving "never again".

Since our birth as a nation, we have pursued peace-centric domestic and foreign policies. In that spirit, Bangladesh has taken the lead in introducing the resolution on a culture of peace every year in the General Assembly since 2000.

We reaffirm the call for a resumption of the Middle East peace process and for ending all forms of hostilities and discrimination against the brotherly Palestinian people.

In recognition of the potential role of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, we look forward to receiving bold and innovative proposals from the Secretary-General on financing for sustaining peace. I

am pleased to announce a contribution of $100,000 from Bangladesh for the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund.

As a major troop- and police-contributing country, Bangladesh underscores the importance of upholding the effectiveness and credibility of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We shall maintain our own capability readiness, remain open to further smart pledges, enhance the scope of our peacekeeping training and deploy more female peacekeepers.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to any allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. As an endorser of the Voluntary Compact on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, I am committed to the Secretary-General's Circle of Leadership to combat this scourge. I am also pleased to announce a contribution of $100,000 to the Victim Support Fund established for this purpose.

Terrorism and violent extremism have become a major threat to peace, stability and development. Terrorists have no religion, belief or race. Having been the target of a number of terrorist attacks myself, I personally empathize with the victims of terrorism and appreciate their need for protection.

We denounce the use of religion to justify violent extremism. I have involved families, women, young people, the media and religious leaders at the community level to offset the spread of violent extremism. In this regard, I reiterate my calls, first, for stopping the supply of arms to terrorists; secondly, for preventing terrorist financing; and, thirdly, for the peaceful settlement of all international disputes. I also urge the United Nations to address the growing threats emanating from cyberspace in order to prevent money-laundering, terrorist financing and other transnational organized crimes.

We believe in promoting safe, orderly and regular migration. Last year, we proposed developing a sound migration governance framework through the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration. I am pleased that the United Nations is delivering on the formation of the compact for migration and refugees.

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change remains our bastion of hope for climate justice. By recognizing climate vulnerability, we are building resilience against the grave impacts of climate change. We believe in the potential of the blue economy in advancing the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and seas.

Bangladesh has achieved exemplary success in building resilience against flood and other disasters. Crop intensification and the invention of water-resistant crops have helped us achieve self-sufficiency in food. We have efficiently responded to the massive flood that struck the entire South Asian region this year.

As a member of the United Nations High-level Panel on Water, I attach high priority to implementing its comprehensive action plan. Bangladesh ensured access to safe water for 87 per cent of its population by 2015, and we aim for full access to safe water for our population by 2030.

We believe that there are close links between peace, stability and development. We share the conviction that addressing poverty, hunger, illiteracy, unemployment and inequality is crucial to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies. We are committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In that regard, our Government has adopted a whole-of-society approach. The SDGs complement our vision to transform Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

Even before the adoption of the SDGs, we initiated unique social programmes that reflect the themes of the SDGs, such as the Ekti Bari Ekti Khamar — "One Household One Farm" project; community clinics; the Ashrayan shelter project and the Digital Bangladesh initiative. We also promote education support, women's empowerment, education for all, the social safety net, environmental protection, and investment and development. Our voluntary national review presented to the United Nations this year showcased our progress in and commitment to achieving the SDGs.

In 2016-2017, Bangladesh's economy posted a gross domestic product growth rate of more than 7.24 per cent, and our foreign currency reserves reached $32.1 billion. We have lowered the poverty rate from 56.7 per cent in 1991 to 23.2 per cent today. Our per capita income is expected to grow to $1,602 by the end of the current fiscal year, from only $543 in 2005-2006. Our life expectancy has increased to almost 72 years. These figures are indications of our inclusive development, in which no citizen is left behind.

To ensure inclusive growth, promote investment and employment opportunities for all, we have launched an initiative to develop 100 special economic zones around the country. Our extensive social safety net measures give coverage to many vulnerable segments

of our population, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence and vulnerable mothers under economic hardship.

Special emphasis has been given to unlocking the potentials of physically challenged children and people. Some 103 service and care centres, along with 32 mobile therapy vans, attend to the needs of persons with disabilities, including those affected by autism. A total of 18,500 community health clinics are being complemented by medical services through the use of mobile phones and web cameras in districts and subdistricts.

There is now a public primary school in every village of the country, and 38,331 educational institutions have been equipped with digital laboratories and multimedia classrooms. Special emphasis is being placed on promoting technical and vocational education and training for young people.

Our youth are the main movers in realizing my vision for a knowledge-based, digital Bangladesh. We are working to create an environment to allow them to pursue transformative education, find decent jobs and turn into truly global citizens.

I am happy to announce that Bangabandhu-1, our very first satellite, is scheduled to be launched this year on our Victory Day, 16 December.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that we do not want war. We want peace. We seek the well-being of humankind, not its destruction. We want sustainable development. Let this be our collective goal.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement she has just made.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu.

Mr. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Tabimasmas (Vanuatu) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to make this statement on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Vanuatu. I join other speakers in congratulating His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. As an elected Vice-President of this organ, Vanuatu is pleased to work closely with you, Sir, as you guide us through this session. Please be assured that you have the full support of my delegation.

I would also like to commend His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson for his vision, leadership and dedication during his tenure as President of the Assembly during the seventy-first session. Allow me also to express my profound gratitude to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for his notable leadership to this day.

On behalf of my people, the people of Vanuatu, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the victims of the earthquake in Mexico, to the victims of Hurricanes Maria and Irma, which devastated the Caribbean, and to the victims of Hurricane Harvey, which ravaged Texas.

My delegation welcomes the theme of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet". This is a timely and necessary theme. It is timely because, when we look around, we see a world plunged in endless political conflicts and turmoil. We are witnessing an escalation of extremism and violence caused by racism, xenophobia, hostility and intolerance. The theme is also necessary because we must remember that the human being and a sustainable future are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Today, 72 years after the creation of the United Nations, doubts continue to weigh on us. When will all nations, rich and poor, and people of all races, learn to live together in peace, embracing diversity and practicing tolerance? We must ask ourselves when conflicts and wars will become scourges of the past. At one time or another in the last 72 years, we have failed in our duty to be a United Nations endeavouring to achieve the economic and social advancement of all

our peoples and to join forces to promote peace and security in the world.

The world continues to face economic and political challenges, and the world economy remains confined to a prolonged period of slow growth, with a global gross product estimated to grow by some 2.7 per cent in 2017. This is only an economic stabilization and does not respond to growth in world demand. The rise of terrorism, violent extremism, asymmetric wars and political instability in the world have reached an unprecedented level in 2017 and will continue to weigh on the economic prospects of many regions.

Vanuatu continues to be seriously concerned about the large movements of refugees and migrants, many of whom are fleeing violent conflict, disasters and poverty. In 2016, some 65 million people were forcibly displaced around the world. The rural exodus to the city and a relatively high rate of urbanization also present the same challenges at the national level.

Vanuatu notes with deep concern the irrefutable link between the global crisis and the failure to respect the principles of the responsibility to protect and the prevention of mass atrocity crimes in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and South Sudan, to cite only a few.

As a small island State exposed to the rising sea level that will overwhelm its islands and force its people to seek refuge, I would like to appeal to the international community to mobilize its efforts and to begin the debate on the establishment of an international legal framework that will truly solve the problem of climate-change refugees from small island States.

As a small island State in the Pacific, Vanuatu is a strong supporter of a rules-based international regime through which States act fairly and transparently with each other, and through which economic development could come to fruition and where peace and security in the world could be maintained. That is why Vanuatu has faith in the United Nations. The United Nations remains for Vanuatu the best hope and catalyst for regional and global peace and security. I would like to highlight the valuable and potential work that this body has done to lift millions out of poverty, promote and protect human rights, and bring about an international order seen in much of the world today. However, to remain relevant, there is a need for strategic reforms.

Being a permanent member of the Security Council is more a responsibility than a privilege. It is therefore incumbent on the Council to disregard the political interests of both sides and to seek compromise solutions. It is essential to ensure that the Security Council meets the objectives, principles and promises of the Charter of the United Nations. We support the reforms of the Security Council that reflect current geopolitical dynamics and provide for a more equitable regional representation as well as a continuous reform of the United Nations peacekeeping operations to better prevent and resolve complex conflicts in our contemporary world and to better protect civilians.

My Government welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda (A/72/124). I am particularly encouraged by the fact that the report highlights the need to have more robust coordination and accountability procedures within the United Nations system and realign it to better respond to countries' efforts to implement the transformative 2030 Agenda.

Earlier this year, we launched our national sustainable development plan to 2030, also known as the People's Plan, which encompasses sustainable development goals. We know that the way ahead to implement this national road map will be tough, given structural weaknesses, extreme weather events, frequent earthquakes and external economic shocks. Vanuatu has ranked as one of the most disaster-prone countries for four years in a row. To make the path even more difficult, the General Assembly has planned to remove Vanuatu's status as a least developed country (LDC) in December 2020. Unfortunately, the fact that we have developed and emerged from LDC status does not mean that we have eliminated our vulnerabilities and structural barriers.

My Government calls on the United Nations to ensure that the change in the status of a country like ours does not cause disruption or hamper our development. The measures in place to support the change in LDC status are simply insufficient given the challenges that these countries will face. The transition mechanisms after such a change must be further strengthened. Vanuatu calls on the United Nations to continue to recognize Vanuatu as an LDC, rather than completely eliminating the specific support for it as an LDC. We also call on development partners and aid agencies to consider gradually reducing LDC development assistance. There should be clear provisions for reducing trade benefits

to LDCs, stipulated in bilateral agreements and by the World Trade Organization.

My Government is also concerned about threats to peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. The provocative missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violates several Security Council resolutions and poses an unprecedented threat to security in the region and around the world. Vanuatu condemns in the strongest terms the most recent round of missile launches and joins with the international community in encouraging the Administration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to end its nuclear and missile development programme. We also call on the United Nations to find common ground with the Republic and to engage in dialogue for a peaceful solution.

My Government reaffirms its commitment to the denuclearization of the Pacific and welcomes the Treaty adopted at the conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument banning nuclear weapons. Vanuatu reaffirms its commitment to complete nuclear disarmament.

The report on regionalism recently published by the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat provides a geopolitical assessment of the trends, threats and opportunities for regional development and political aspirations. It includes strategies that Forum members can use to build a stronger, more resilient and responsive Pacific region. We in the Pacific know how important it is to work in unison, because it is through unity that we are stronger and can achieve positive results. Similarly, the actions of the United Nations are more decisive when members are united.

Our understanding of the science of climate change has deepened over the past few years, and its devastating impact knows no borders. The terrible earthquake in Mexico, Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean, Hurricane Harvey in Texas and tropical storm Pam, which devastated Vanuatu in 2015, are brutal warnings from Mother Nature that the climate is changing faster than our efforts to counter that change. Solving a problem that has taken centuries to manifest itself requires more reflection and effort on our part. By collectively reducing the rate at which we emit greenhouse gases, we can make a major difference. We can limit the average rise in temperature to less than 1.5°C, change the chemistry of the oceans, manage sea-level rise and prevent disasters for generations to come. We urge all States Members of the United Nations to persevere. We therefore urge the United States, as part of the one world we have, to reverse its decision and enforce the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

My country is deeply concerned about climate change and the Paris Agreement, and we are committed to reversing the decline in the health of our oceans. The United Nations Ocean Conference, held here in New York in June, has shown that the quality of the oceans, which contribute to our livelihoods, has been seriously undermined and that urgent and immediate attention on our part is required, now more than ever before. We are from an island nation surrounded by a vast ocean and know how important it is. We are very concerned about the health of the ocean because it has an impact on humankind's survival.

My Government is committed to implementing the resolutions of the Conference, including Sustainable Development Goal 14, by 2030, through partnerships and national efforts. We are committed to achieving our national goal of 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030, with the support of our development partners. We have launched our national oceans policy, but we will also ban the use of plastic bags by 2018 in order to reduce the amount of ocean debris and preserve its health. At the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in Apia, I called on the leaders and peoples of the Pacific island countries to join Vanuatu in this struggle and to be more responsible in preserving our blue Pacific Ocean in order to guarantee human survival.

My Government remains fully committed to achieving its national sustainable development plan. We have begun to meet the challenge of turning our goals into tangible action. My Government pledges to submit Vanuatu's voluntary report in mid-2018. We hope to share our progress and our failures in meeting our sustainable development goals, while fully respecting the continuity of the partnership for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Vanuatu is convinced that in order to end poverty, opportunities for all people, in particular women, must be made available. Greater access must be given to education, nutrition and health. My Government is committed to eliminating the barriers that disproportionately affect our vulnerable groups. We successfully launched our national policies on gender equality and the protection of children in November 2016. Both policies take into account violence and discrimination against women and girls, as well as

the neglect, exploitation and abuse of and violence against children. We are also aware that a balanced and equitable distribution of the necessary resources and infrastructure in our provinces will help to develop the provinces and reduce poverty.

My Government is committed to ensuring a peaceful, just and inclusive society and to building responsive institutions capable of delivering quality services to our citizens. We work with our development partners to enhance the resilience and adaptability of our peoples to climate change and natural disasters. My Government is committed to structural reform to ensure political and economic stability, based on equitable and sustainable growth that would create jobs and increase our citizens' incomes.

My Government sincerely thanks our traditional development partners for their contribution to the economic development of our country. We are ready to forge new partnerships to further stimulate our productive and infrastructure sectors.

My Government is concerned about the fact that the United Nations has lost much of its ability and willingness to implement Security Council resolution 1514 (1960), of 14 December 1960, which called for an swift and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. Decolonization must return to the agenda of the United Nations, and all efforts must be free of the pressures of international politics. We all have a collective responsibility to guarantee the self-determination of peoples under the colonial yoke.

We firmly believe that territorial disputes should be resolved peacefully, while respecting cultural heritage and adhering to United Nations conventions and to the provisions of international law of the sea. In that regard, I should like to point out that there have been recent incursions into disputed areas of Vanuatu, which is not in keeping with United Nations principles or the provisions of international law of the sea.

For half a century, the international community has witnessed several instances of torture, murder, exploitation, sexual violence and arbitrary arrest that the people of West Papua have suffered at the hands of the Indonesians, and it has ignored their voices and calls for help. We urge the Human Rights Council to investigate those abuses. We also call on our leading partners around the world to support the legal right to self-determination of West Papua. We call on them, along with Indonesia, to end all forms of violence and find common ground with the citizens of West Papua in order to facilitate a process that will enable them to freely express their will.

I return to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations to reaffirm the belief in fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person and the equal rights of men and women, and of nations, great and small. I believe that we all have an obligation to work together to lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba. Removing those restrictions will, inter alia, enable the Cuban people to enjoy their human rights.

New Caledonia is in the critical phase of deciding its future, as the 2018 referendum is quickly approaching. We thank all countries, in particular France, that have supported the process thus far. We urge the administering Power to ensure that the referendum is fair and transparent and that the wishes of the people are honoured. We also call on France to facilitate a fair and transparent process of self-determination for French Polynesia.

In conclusion, as we begin the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, let us work together with a specific goal in mind: to respond judiciously to the many challenges we face for the common good of humankind. May God bless the States Members of the United Nations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Embaló (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I am honoured to stand at this rostrum and speak to the international community gathered here in the full expression of our universality.

Allow me to convey greetings from the people of Guinea-Bissau to all Heads of State and Government, representatives of the States Members of the United Nations, who have come to add pomp and substance to this session of the General Assembly.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. To your predecessor, Ambassador Peter Thomson, I would like to express our recognition of his performance and wish him continued success in his remarkable diplomatic career.

As we all know, the world today is full of complex and grave challenges, such as hotspots of political instability and geopolitical tension around the world, the seriousness of which cannot be overlooked by the statesmen and citizens of the world; the scourge of terrorism, which unfortunately does not seem to be abating, as a phenomenon that deserves our unanimous condemnation; the human tragedy of migration waves, particularly those crossing the Mediterranean, and the saga of refugees; glaring social inequality, the expanding geography of poverty, and the intensity of human suffering, which we see in vast areas of the planet; and the sorrow of racial, gender and religious discrimination and the threat of climate breakdown on a planetary scale, with prospects of frightening, and not unlikely, consequences. In short, it is not difficult to imagine how many ills of the world are addressed by the United Nations on a daily basis, and require the attention and constructive engagement of the international community represented here.

The United Nations has a long history of solidarity with and commitment to Guinea-Bissau. It began with our struggle for national liberation and has not been broken since. Our goal is to further strengthen our institutional engagement with the United Nations. In so doing, we are merely reaffirming our firm belief in international law, peace and security among nations and the social and moral progress of humankind, which are the values on which the United Nations was created.

We continue to be going through a period of institutional challenges in Guinea-Bissau, for which the Conakry Accord laid out a solution in October 2016. There are challenges related to the functioning of some of our core political institutions, namely the Parliament and the Government, but it is with profound solemnity that I inform the General Assembly that civilian peace reigns in my country. There are no reports of universal human rights violations that merit complaints or that are worthy of concern.

Public safety indicators related to people and property follow a normal pattern. Regular payments are being made to public servants, and on the foreign debt service and internal arrears. The marketing campaign for our main export crop, cashew nuts, broke all records, which had a positive impact on the social environment in Guinea-Bissau. Recently, our public finance controls were praised by the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral partners. The State and civil society are very far from any political breakdown. Indeed, we are fortunately not counting the dead or injured in Guinea-Bissau, nor are we assessing any damage to public property resulting from a breakdown in the authority of the State.

The most recently held summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which convened in Monrovia, placed its trust in the Bissau-Guinean people's determination to internally resolve the problems related to the political and institutional impasse that has affected my country for the past two years. In that regard, we are pleased that the African Union, at its most recent summit in Addis Ababa; the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) Council of Ministers meeting in Brasilia; and the United Nations put the political situation in Guinea-Bissau back on their agendas. With the patience, wisdom and solidarity of our international partners — ECOWAS, the African Union, the CPLP and the Secretary-General, who is retaining his Special Representative in Guinea-Bissau — we will overcome the political and institutional impasse that persists in my country.

We have taken note of the General Assembly's agenda, which, in fact, is largely consistent with our own hopes and concerns. The subregion of the Economic Community of West African States where Guinea-Bissau is located has significant potential for economic growth, consistent poverty reduction and the sharing of social welfare. There is nothing unattainable in our dream to drive — at the subregional level, together, in peace and security, and with productive work — the inclusive social progress that we all desire.

We have examples of success in our subregion, but we also see distressing signs on the ECOWAS horizon of potential threats to both the internal constitutional order of States and geopolitical stability in the subregion. Terrorist acts are seriously affecting Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, with clear and grave consequences for peace, social cohesion and stability.

Guinea-Bissau fully supports the pooling of efforts in the context of the Group of Five for the Sahel, advocates the integrity of Mali, and calls for an all-out fight against terrorism in all its manifestations. Indeed, in order to face so many challenges at the same time, namely internal security, the preservation of the territorial integrity of States and peacekeeping within the space of ECOWAS, we need help. We therefore count on the United Nations and all of its specialized agencies, and all our international partners. Only if we work together will we be able to transform our subregion into a bastion of peace and internal security and, by extension, a bastion in the service of international security.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a challenge, but no development strategy is worthy of such a title if, in the case of Guinea-Bissau, it does not begin by placing the issue of food security squarely and sustainably at the core of its concept. To let Guinea-Bissau, a country with a widely recognized agricultural capacity, slip into dependence on large volumes of imported rice every year was certainly one of the worst economic policy mistakes that was made. The challenge we face is very clear. It is the political and economic challenge of food security. It is the moral challenge of overcoming poverty. It is the test of ensuring zero hunger in Guinea-Bissau.

With that as the focus of our approach, we are merely restating the central item on the General Assembly's agenda in another way — promoting health from cradle to the grave. I will surprise no one when I state that there is no positive health indicator that can stand against the violence of poverty, hunger or malnutrition. There is no way to bring down the morbidity and mortality indicators that assail us as a result of the scourges of AIDS, malaria, diarrhoea and infectious diseases, without sustained poverty reduction, and if we do not successfully take on the moral challenge of zero hunger.

At a more specific level, my country has made progress with regard to the health care that we provide to our population, in particular to children and women of reproductive age. However, given that the State alone is unable to guarantee that public service to the entire population, we continue to rely on international cooperation and United Nations support through its specialized institutions. But health and poverty are not the only elements that go hand in hand. In the context of poverty and extreme nutritional deficiency, we do not see how we can aim for good education for our children.

According to recognized scientific criteria, 12 per cent of Guinea-Bissau's territory is comprised of ecologically protected areas. In that regard, I can say without hesitation that one of our most important educational achievements has been the development of a vigilant, ecological awareness of an increasingly sharp and active sense of environmental responsibility, in particular among the youth of Guinea-Bissau — the foundation of our future. But we are realistic; we have a long road ahead of us and much effort to be made in order to ensure environmental sustainability, as we economically exploit our natural resources. We consider the Paris Agreement to be a fundamental victory in harmonizing States' environmental policies and in their promotion worldwide.

We must enhance our relations with the People's Republic of China, a country that has been our friend since the difficult years of our struggle for national liberation. As the One China policy is consistent with peace and security in the region and with China's yearning for its unity to be restored, we reiterate our full solidarity with the People's Republic of China.

Security Council reform remains a need that the international community has rightly highlighted. Guinea-Bissau's position is the same one that we, as an African country, advocated for and adopted within the framework of the African Union.

I express the solidarity of the people and the Government of Guinea-Bissau to the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone, who have suffered greatly from the natural disaster that has assailed their country. We also offer our solidarity to all countries that have been victimized by natural disasters that cause irreparable loss of human lives, the destruction of property and great suffering among the survivors.

I express the unfailing solidarity of Guinea-Bissau to the Republic of Cuba, which has provided support

to the Bissau-Guinean people at our most challenging moments. Today, as in the past, we call for the lifting of the economic embargo that has prevented that friendly nation from developing normally for more than 60 years.

We also support the hopes of the Palestinian people for the establishment of their own State, coexisting side by side with the State of Israel, based on trust, peace and security.

I will close my remarks with a reference to the women of Guinea-Bissau. I would like to say that women in Guinea-Bissau are still far from taking the place that they deserve in our society and in our institutions in general. The policy of gender equality — more specifically of equal opportunity for girls and women in Guinea-Bissau — is undoubtedly a test for my country's democracy. It is a great challenge for our political parties and all Government officials in Guinea-Bissau. I hope that all of the political, economic and social actors in my country will continue to converge on the legitimate advocacy for women's rights and, in general, for the promotion of human rights in Guinea-Bissau.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Umaro Sissoco Embaló, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Selom Komi Klassou, Prime Minister of the Togolese Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Selom Komi Klassou, Prime Minister of the Togolese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Selom Komi Klassou, Prime Minister of the Togolese Republic, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Klassou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): It is indeed both a pleasure and an honour to address the General Assembly and to convey cordial greetings from the President of the Togolese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, who, because of a last-minute commitment, could not be here with us in New York. I take the floor to deliver the following message on his behalf.

"It is with a renewed sense of joy that we take part in the seventy-second regular session of the General Assembly, which is dedicated to a theme that is as revealing as it is inspiring — 'Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet'.

"First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, on his election. I would also like to reiterate my congratulations to the new Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and assure him of Togo's support during his tenure, as we strive to achieve the noble objectives of our Organization.

"The theme of this session reminds us that human beings and the well-being of our peoples must remain the priority of our actions, both at the national level and at the international level as we pool our efforts. In the context of our debates, this theme raises the issue of human security, which encompasses both the imperatives of peace, development, access to quality health care, a healthy environment, food security and jobs, in particular for young people.

"Those challenges that our State faces, in particular the developing countries, are a reminder of the importance of implementing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, all of which we adopted together.

"In that regard, my country is working actively to adopt its national development plan before the end of the year. That plan will replace the strategy for accelerated growth, development and the promotion of employment for the period 2018-2022, which is coming to an end. The new development planning document will identify priorities and define the appropriate actions to be implemented in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

"With that in mind, in February 2017, the Government set up a strategic monitoring unit for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and international development agreements. The unit is tasked with monitoring the progress of priority action undertaken on those fronts. Togo, which is preparing to take a seat on the Economic and Social Council as of 1 January 2018, is committed to taking an active part in the various actions and

initiatives of the Council, with a view to achieving a harmonious and resolute implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

"The quest for the well-being of people is at the core of the general policy of the Togolese Government. That need guides sectoral initiatives on a day-to-day basis by giving priority to the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children and young people. More specifically, my country, while maintaining consistency in the progress already achieved in the areas of economic growth, poverty reduction and the promotion of a peaceful and participatory democracy, spares no effort in its attempt to ensure genuine inclusive and sustainable growth for the population.

"The emergency community development programme, designed to complement the programme for vulnerable populations, for the period 2016-2018, aims to help bring about considerable improvement in the living conditions of people in communities where basic social and economic services and infrastructure highlight social inequalities. Over the long term, those inequalities must be reduced with targeted action so as to meet urgent and priority needs, carried out in synergy with other activities that are part of normal sectoral policies. Such action focuses primarily on access to drinking water, access to energy, rural entrepreneurship and agribusiness, productivity and wealth creation, employment, the empowerment of women and young people, and social protection.

"With regard to social protection, for example, it should be noted that, following the decision to make education free of charge in 2008 and school canteens gradually available to all public-school children, the Government decided to establish a social and medical benefits system for schoolchildren. That measure, which will be extended to private secular and faith-based sectors in the coming years, will cater to 2 million children involved in the pilot phase of the project.

"In addition, in the field of health, the development of the new national health development plan for the period 2017-2022 enables the Government to provide appropriate solutions to the problems identified and to align national priorities with those of the Sustainable Development Goals.

"The harmonious and sustainable development of Togo cannot be achieved without peace, social cohesion, the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. Above and beyond the various action taken to improve the well-being of the population, those requirements to achieve such development will also depend on the political, institutional and constitutional reforms under way. In that regard, drawing on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Government recently transmitted to the National Assembly for consideration a bill on articles 52, 59 and 60 of the Constitution of 14 October 1992, relating in particular to limiting mandates to a term of five years, renewable once, for members of the National Assembly and the President of the Republic, and to the voting method, which is a first-past-the-post system with two rounds.

"That reform project, which meets the profound hopes and desires of the Togolese people, was adopted just three days ago, on Tuesday, 19 September, by more than two thirds of the members of the National Assembly. It should be underscored that that process was carried out in accordance with the provisions of article 144 of the Constitution, which stipulates the procedure for constitutional revision as follows:

> 'The bill or the proposal of revision is considered as adopted if it is voted with the majority of four fifths of the deputies composing the National Assembly. In default of this majority, the bill or proposal of revision, adopted with the majority of two thirds of the deputies composing the National Assembly, is submitted to referendum.'

"In addition, the voting on the bill or proposal by a two-thirds majority of the members of the National Assembly raises the issue of constitutional reform directly with the people through the holding of a referendum. A bill will be submitted immediately to the people for ratification. As the history of our country reflects, a referendum will enable the country to freely and fully exercise its sovereignty, by making the text of the Constitution a fundamental norm.

"With regard to human rights, the will of the Togolese Government to fulfil its obligations in the protection and promotion of such rights

is irreversible. It was a long-term undertaking, but Togo remained committed to consolidating the gains made and to further strengthening the measures guaranteeing fundamental freedoms. We will also continue to work within our mandate at the Human Rights Council, which expires in 2018, in order to ensure that that body plays its full role in respecting human rights and protecting the well-being of the peoples of the world.

"With regard to the challenges facing our States, I call on the entire international community to take responsible action to mitigate the threat of global warming. The quality of life of the people on our planet must be preserved for the good of future generations. My country, which often faces the vagaries of coastal erosion, flooding and irregular rainy seasons, believes that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change remains an ideal framework for carrying out joint initiatives that will safeguard the climate.

"In West Africa, the recent bad weather, which resulted in significant loss of life in Sierra Leone and tens of thousands of victims in the Niger, has conjured up in people's memories the spectre of the terrible Ebola crisis that the subregion had to deal with two years ago. Those losses, which we all lament, should compel our individual States and those outside the African continent to act urgently to develop a rigorous and effective plan for ensuring that our peoples have decent living standards and a resilient health-care system, with particular emphasis on our technical services' early-warning and prevention capabilities. To that end, I would like to urge States to work together to intensify our efforts, not only to prevent the resurgence of previously eradicated epidemics but also to significantly reduce and even eliminate other diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, which, tragically, continue to cause many casualties in Africa.

"The era we live in has also been marked by a surge in new security challenges, from maritime insecurity to terrorism, which we must fight in all their forms. Maritime insecurity undermines our development, deprives our people of vital resources and creates areas of lawlessness that criminal networks try to exploit for their various types of trafficking. Togo was therefore pleased with the success of the African Union's Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa, held in Lomé in October 2016. Today, thanks to the commitment of the States that participated in the Summit, we now have the African Union Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development, a harmonized, legally binding instrument aimed at promoting the development of the blue economy in Africa. I would also like to take this opportunity to invite and encourage countries that have not yet signed the Lomé Charter to do so, and thereby strengthen the legal framework for regulating our States' joint action, under the auspices of the African Union, for preserving our seas and oceans.

"We cannot deny that we will never be able to achieve the goal that is the theme of this year's session if we do not intensify our efforts to maintain world peace and security. The recent terrorist attacks in France, Great Britain, Spain, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and other countries have highlighted the importance of concerted action on the part of the entire international community if we are to tackle this scourge, which knows no borders and does not discriminate among its targets. That is why in the region where it is most prevalent in Africa, the Sahel, I commend the initiative of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which will help us further strengthen inter-State cooperation, and urge the most affluent countries among us to support the push for an effective fight that will enable us to eradicate terrorism in that part of Africa. In that regard, I was particularly pleased with the Secretary-General's establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism in June. Eliminating radicalism and religious fundamentalism should also be a major priority for our States, along with our urgent duty to provide convincing alternatives, especially for young people, that can guarantee their future and shield them from the rhetoric of hatred and other appeals to violence.

"In view of the major challenge that migration represents today and the security crisis it creates, we should take strong measures not only to limit the ever-increasing demands placed on countries of destination but especially to tackle the problem where it begins, in the countries of origin. Finding adequate solutions to the migration crisis also means finding definitive solutions to the various conflicts that undermine the ability of the States

concerned to ensure effective control over their borders and result in the massive displacement of populations seeking security and a better life outside their own countries. We all know that the crises in Syria and Libya, and the fierce fight that the Iraqi Government is currently waging against the Islamic State, are not confined to those countries' borders, but have attendant results that include the destabilization of their regions, worsening terrorism and a migration crisis. In that regard, it is Togo's hope that in Africa, the various initiatives of the African Union and other regional organizations, supported by the United Nations, will help to resolve the disputes in South Sudan and restore stability in Libya.

"In Asia, the recent missile launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have raised tensions within the international community, sparked heated debates in the Security Council and increased people's fears, particularly in Japan and the Republic of Korea. I urge the main protagonists to exercise restraint and reason in order to preserve peace and stability in the region. There can be no question that only dialogue and concerted efforts can settle this issue.

"The challenges that our world is facing are having a real impact on Africa's development. If we are to tackle them effectively, one of the most urgent tasks still ahead of us is the economic transformation of the continent. We are well aware that it is the African elite that has primary responsibility for that transformation, but we would also like to emphasize the importance in that regard of international solidarity. Besides the efforts that must be made to implement the SDGs, it will be crucial to foster investment in Africa, particularly in science, industry, agribusiness and advanced technology. Our transformation will also require the efforts of the various regional economic communities. By ensuring that their peoples and economies are properly integrated, they can promote African integration generally and thereby contribute to harmonious development in Africa as a whole.

"In my capacity as current Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), I pledge to work with my colleagues to make our shared space an ECOWAS of our peoples, in accordance with the objectives of our organization. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners and invite them to continue to work alongside our States and the ECOWAS Commission with a view to translating our multiple initiatives into concrete action.

"The United Nations has helped the world to make a great deal of progress in the areas of peace and security, the promotion of human rights and the preservation of our planet. It has been able to achieve those advances thanks to its revitalization of some of its organs and, above all, by adapting them to the changes that have taken place since the Organization was founded. With regard to reform of the Security Council, Togo believes that Member States should resolve to conclude the process, which began more than two decades ago, with the goal of making the Council more effective. We hope that significant progress can be made in that direction during this session. The reforms should also encompass our peacekeeping forces. In that regard, we commend the Secretary-General's initiative for a draft compact between the United Nations and its Member States on eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping operations, and we hope that all States will adhere to it so as to put an end to this problem for good.

"I firmly believe that, by working together during this session, the General Assembly will make a significant contribution to strengthening our States' commitment to making our planet a world of shared peace and prosperity for the well-being of our peoples."

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Togolese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Selom Komi Klassou, Prime Minister of the Togolese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Makei, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Makei (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The past few decades have been marked by two contradictory trends — increasing political fragmentation and increasing economic globalization. The first of those is associated with the global political instability that has resulted from wars, conflicts, terrorism, xenophobia and other factors and that is giving rise to a feeling

of mounting chaos and despair. Why are we in this predicament? Because we did not truly put an end to our last momentous conflict, the Cold War. It did not end with a peace treaty, as had always been the case with previous major wars. As a result, we were left without the generally accepted frameworks that could have guided our subsequent behaviour. The various Powers formed differing interpretations of this state of geopolitical uncertainty and acted accordingly. What seemed obvious and legitimate to some was incomprehensible and illegitimate for others. Basically, all the problems that have accumulated since the early 1990s are the legacy of our inability to bring an end the Cold War once and for all. But it is never too late to do the right thing.

Last year, the President of Belarus came up with the idea of launching a new negotiating process similar to the Helsinki process of the 1970s, while, needless to say, keeping in mind the problems and threats that are relevant to us today. We believe that the possibility of expanding and reconsidering that format is worth discussing. We propose that the key global players, particularly China, Russia, the United States of America and the States of the European Union, engage in a dialogue on a strategic vision for new and constructive relations. For its part, the Republic of Belarus is ready to provide the forum for such a dialogue. We are willing to carry out that task with the same responsibility that we have shown over the past few years in the efforts to settle the crisis in Ukraine. Minsk is prepared to be the bridge that can connect the issues of the past with those yet to come. We believe that the agreements that could result from such a dialogue would, in essence, put an end to that last major war. They could subsequently be implemented through the active engagement of the United Nations, and with that, stop the growing political fragmentation in the world in its tracks. Some may consider this unrealistic in today's world, but three years ago the President of the Republic of Belarus's proposal to send peacekeepers to Ukraine was greeted in exactly the same way, and yet now that idea has been revived and is being actively discussed in the United Nations.

Growing globalization, the second of the two trends under discussion, has undoubtedly contributed to progress and economic development worldwide, but it too has its downside. The fact is that the majority of the world's population has not been able to enjoy its benefits, especially in the past few decades, and as a consequence, we have been unable to eliminate poverty and inequality has steadily risen. Much has been said in recent years, including from this rostrum, about the economic reasons for this situation, but to put it bluntly, the global economy has not been run according to a win-win formula. It is designed to suit the interests not of ordinary people but of corporate capital. As a result, economic globalization has not been that rising tide that lifts all boats.

Nevertheless, there are are some grounds for optimism. We base that on two factors — regional integration and new creative ideas in the global economy. Regional integration is a key feature of today's world. Where it is successful, it leaves less room for political fragmentation. Belarus has been actively involved in a number of integration processes in its region. This year, for example, we hold the chairmanship of the Central European Initiative. In the past few years, Belarus has been vigorously advocating for cooperation and interconnectivity among regional processes, an approach we call "integrating integrations". It is based on the assumption that, in terms of structural functionality, today's world is made up of regions as well as countries. We firmly believe that cooperation among regional integration processes is as essential to their functioning as it is to that of States. And where creative new ideas are concerned, we would like to single out the One Belt, One Road initiative promoted by the People's Republic of China, which represents a new type of economic multilateralism, one that seeks to bring benefits not only to its individual participants but to the global economy as a whole and is a true win-win approach. The Republic of Belarus both participates in and supports that initiative. In our view, "integrating integrations" and One Belt, One Road can help us shift the global economy from a path of divergence to one of convergence. Globalization must become more fair.

How can the United Nations help to address the challenges posed by political fragmentation and uneven economic globalization? One of its primary tasks in the previous century was to prevent the great Powers from waging wars among themselves. It succeeded in that task, providing a forum where opposing parties could work towards a positive end. The result was that a third World War did not happen.

Today the realities are different, and they require us to reconsider the Organization's role and place in our world. In particular, the question is about how the United Nations fits into a world that is increasingly dominated

by various closed clubs and informal entities. We believe that, as it has always done, the United Nations must work to strengthen the system of inter-State relations. It is at the United Nations that its Members can successfully resolve their differences, forge mutually acceptable solutions and tackle transboundary threats. For its part, the United Nations should serve as a unifying force for the international relations system as a whole. In other words, the entire complex network of new dimensions in those relations — closed clubs, informal entities, alliances and others — should be anchored in the United Nations. If that is done, the system we have can function in a coherent, concerted and effective manner.

The new Secretary-General has launched a comprehensive process for reform of the United Nations, and we welcome this undertaking on the whole. We would particularly like to highlight the relevance and importance of his initiatives where the maintenance of international peace and security and the fight against terrorism are concerned. We realize that the degree of success of this transformation will to a large extent determine the role and place of the Organization in the world for many years to come, and we believe that success will come if we all uphold three major principles.

First, reform must be transparent, logical and result-oriented.

Secondly, it should not lead to more red tape or a greater burden on Member States.

Thirdly, reform should be inclusive. Every Member State's voice must be heard. However, the most important part of reform of the United Nations system is not about reviewing the interactions and alignment of its individual bodies or optimizing its personnel and funding. Its most serious, meaningful and far-reaching reform can and must occur in our relationship to the Organization.

Today the General Assembly constitutes a unique deliberative forum that is essential to our recognition of both the fragility and the diversity of our world. We, the Member States, need to regain our sense of ownership of our Organization, which has been somewhat lost. The United Nations is not made up just of its Secretariat and its field missions, programmes and funds. First and foremost, it is about its Member States and their will or lack of it, about dialogue and cooperation or alienation. No ideal composition of the Security Council or perfectly optimized General Assembly agenda will mean anything to the world beyond the East River unless Member States demonstrate a willingness to look for ways to better understand one another and agree more often.

Only in the most minimal way does our routine work in the General Assembly, agreeing on the texts of multiple lengthy resolutions, represent dialogue and an effort to understand our opponents. Our various thematic side events provide a platform for dozens of speakers to present their views, and yet they very rarely try to find an answer to the question of what we must do to better understand one another. How often, during our official meetings and informal consultations, do inconsistent arguments and unanswered questions hang in the air without a response, or simply without being heard? That is why we are absolutely certain that real reform of the United Nations will come only when together we decide to create the necessary conditions — both in terms of organization and setting goals — to use the United Nations as a practical tool for finding ways to resolve contradictions and disputes among Member States without violence or war.

We want both the Secretary-General and Member States to attend to this message. History has shown that every world order or system of international relations is always born out of the intolerable agony brought on by a major war or watershed event. Do we really need another major war or global calamity for our currently rudderless world to achieve some order? I am sure that none of us wants any such scenario.

Belarus has proposed ways to address our fundamental global problems. We fully realize how audacious and unrealistic the idea of forging a renewed architecture for Eurasian-Atlantic cooperation and security may appear to many at this stage. We are willing to admit that our initial ideas about the outlines and, perhaps, the content of this process may be far from perfect. And it is possible that not everyone is ready to embrace Belarus's notion of the importance of closer cooperation among regional integration processes. However, what we do firmly believe is that it is high time that we all came together to act urgently for the sake of peace and prosperity.

I would like to conclude with a fitting quotation from Martin Luther King, Jr., who once said, "Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: 'Too late'." We can still act to make sure that it will not be too late.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): In his first statement at the United Nations in October 1992 (see A/47/PV.24), the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, endorsed the concept of preventive diplomacy, an idea that is now a very high priority for the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly. That concept has been instrumental for Kazakhstan, which for the 25 years of its independent development has shown itself to be a proactive and responsible member of the international community. My country has become a net contributor to peace, security and stability, and economic and social development, not only in our region but far beyond. We have worked diligently to preserve peace and harmony in our multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, while stressing and ensuring the equality and dignity of every citizen. We have achieved that while also creating an efficient economic model. Our economy has grown 20 times over, and major international corporations have established and strengthened their presence in Kazakhstan, investing more than $265 billion. This year the Institute for Management Development ranked Kazakhstan thirty-second in world competitiveness, after a remarkable rise of 15 places, and thirty-fifth on its ease-of-doing-business index, 16 places higher.

Looking forward, Kazakhstan has a clear vision for its future development. We are aiming to become one of the top 30 most competitive economies in the world by 2050, meeting the most advanced global standards in terms of economic performance and transparent governance, especially those of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. A new model of economic growth, Kazakhstan's third modernization, announced by President Nazarbayev in his annual address earlier this year, outlines a path by which our country can achieve those ambitious goals. On the economic front, the third modernization strongly emphasizes Kazakhstan's rapid technological modernization, with a focus on new high-tech industries, information and communication technologies, as well as massive improvements in the business environment, economic productivity, human development and institutional reforms. We have committed resources to streamlining and upgrading our road, rail, airport and pipeline infrastructure and ensured the effective joining of Kazakhstan's national Nurly Zhol programme and China's One Belt, One Road initiative.

This year, with a view to building a more efficient, sustainable and modern system of governance, President Nazarbayev initiated constitutional reform in Kazakhstan. The reform, now well under way, is aimed at a major redistribution of powers among its three branches and at further democratizing the political system as a whole. The key steps are the transfer of some presidential powers to Parliament and the Government, and the strengthening of a genuine system of checks and balances. Those economic and political modernization processes will be accompanied by efforts in our quest to modernize Kazakhstan's national identity and cultural code to create conditions for a new generation of competitive and pragmatic citizens and leaders with a thirst for knowledge, progressive consciousness and an open attitude.

We are pleased to see that the expanded regional partnership among Central Asian States has enhanced our common capability to withstand threats and challenges. With that in mind, during our current membership of the Security Council, we have been focusing on creating a model of a regional zone of peace, security, development and cooperation in Central Asia. We are also striving to further strengthen regional cooperation and integration among the brother nations of Central Asia in such areas as water management, trade and development, transportation and many others. Kazakhstan is focusing in particular on regional cooperation aimed at tackling the disastrous situation of the Aral Sea. The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea is still the only permanent platform for dialogue among Central Asia's Heads of State, and we believe that it could be used to combine our efforts to formulate mid- and long-term strategies for regional development.

The agenda of the General Assembly at its current session focuses on people, encompassing issues of sustainable development and peace and security, and stresses our common responsibility for the future. None of us can ignore the tough realities we see on the ground — the lack of trust and unity, global and regional inequality and injustice, poverty, xenophobia, conflict, terrorism and extremism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That is why this agenda truly reflects the magnitude of the challenges that the United Nations is facing today

and at the same time underlines the Organization's undiminished importance.

While the United Nations machinery has indeed been subject to criticism and demands for long-awaited reforms aimed at enhancing its preparedness for crises and response capabilities, the Organization remains a beacon of hope for billions of people across the globe, a universal institution that holds a promise of a better, safer and more sustainable life. We believe that the Secretary-General is on the right track in that regard in his efforts to unite Member States in revitalizing the United Nations. We also support the special meeting on United Nations reform convened on 18 September by United States President Donald Trump, which we believe will be a fresh incentive to turn our Organization into an effective and efficient tool that serves the whole of humankind.

Kazakhstan is actively working on establishing and hosting a United Nations regional hub in Almaty for multilateral diplomacy, with a focus on sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, disaster risk-reduction and resilience-building in the region and beyond. The initiative is in line with the Secretary-General's idea of optimizing the service-delivery of the United Nations and increasing the effectiveness of United Nations field missions' activities through proper planning and management.

My country has continued to pursue the concept of a security and development nexus, while reflecting the intrinsic interdependence of peace, security and development. Sustainable development is unimaginable without peace, and vice versa. When our security architecture is eroded, along with regional confrontations and international terrorism it undermines the achievements that we havemade within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals and puts our ability to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in jeopardy. Peace is an integral requirement for social, economic and environmental progress.

When we speak of opportunities made possible by global modernization, we must bear in mind the dangers that can prevent all of us from realizing our potential. In our interdependent and connected world, nuclear weapons are no longer an asset, but rather a danger. With moral authority and responsibility based on my nation's bitter experience of hundreds of nuclear tests, my President has stated that eliminating the danger of nuclear weapons is the most urgent task facing humankind in the twenty-first century. That will involve a whole range of important and urgent steps — a complete ban on nuclear testing, the total prohibition of nuclear weapons and the complete and verifiable destruction of nuclear arsenals.

We are deeply concerned about the nuclear tests being conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the only State in the twenty-first century that has continued with such tests, despite the condemnation of the entire international community. I want to stress that the actions that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is taking to further develop its nuclear and missile programmes are totally unacceptable. Pyongyang must take serious steps to restore our trust and must recommit to a much-needed political settlement.

In 2009, the General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 64/35, thereby designating 29 August — the day the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was officially closed in 1991 by the decree of President Nazarbayev — as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. That day has been widely commemorated in Kazakhstan and in the United Nations since 2010. This year has also been marked by several events of international significance. From 25 to 29 August, Astana hosted the conference of the Pugwash movement of scientists commemorating the movement's sixtieth anniversary and the International Day against Nuclear Tests, at which hundreds of scholars, practitioners and officials from some 50 countries gathered to seek ways to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

On that same day, my President and Director General Yukiya Amano, of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), opened the IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium Bank facility in Kazakhstan, with a view to making a significant contribution to the uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and strengthening the global non-proliferation regime. At the opening ceremony, President Nazarbayev outlined a number of important initiatives that I would like to share with the Assembly.

The first will be to convene a summit of all the States that possess nuclear weapons to collectively discuss further steps towards their nuclear disarmament and the attainment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The second is to enhance the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones as effective instruments for ending further

nuclear proliferation and to combine the efforts of States members of such zones at a meeting in our capital of Astana of representatives of all the nuclear-weapon-free zones. The third is to revive the global nuclear-security summit process and to host the first relaunched nuclear-security summit, also in Astana. The fourth is to call for joint efforts to ensure that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is implemented by 2020, which will be the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force.

We must improve the coordination of our common response to the barbaric acts of terrorists. Kazakhstan fully supports the efforts of the United Nations in that regard, especially the creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, with a view to developing a comprehensive long-term approach. That is in line with the President of Kazakhstan's 2015 proposal for the joint establishment of a global anti-terrorism coalition. My country looks forward to actively and constructively participating in the first-ever meeting of the heads of national counter-terrorism agencies next year with a view to forging a new international counter-terrorism partnership. As a practical contribution to the global partnership in the fight against terrorism, my country has begun to formulate a code of conduct for the achievement of a terrorism-free world as one way to expedite work on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We are also committed to implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and have recently allocated $300,000 for its implementation in Central Asia.

Kazakhstan advocates for the broadest possible implementation of multilateral mechanisms and instruments for combating foreign terrorist fighters and shutting down the channels of financial support for their activities through the illegal trade in drugs, natural resources and cultural artefacts. Since there is a wide range of approaches to the issue of controlling Internet content, we believe that the United Nations should take concerted action to prevent the use of the Internet for recruiting and spreading terrorist ideology and radicalizing populations, especially young people. We in Kazakhstan are working on creating a national cybershield system.

The unspeakable suffering of millions of people in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, and the ongoing humanitarian crises and gross violations of human rights in those countries, leave none of us indifferent. Kazakhstan is hosting the Astana process on Syria in order to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the situation there and to promote the United Nations-led negotiations in Geneva, which is the primary forum for those negotiations. We believe that the Astana process, which began earlier this year with the support and direct involvement of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, has produced clear, positive results aimed at strengthening the ceasefire regime, creating de-escalation zones and developing a monitoring mechanism. Success in the Geneva and Astana platforms is critical and should be supported by all if we are to save innocent lives in Syria. It is a moral imperative for all of us.

Kazakhstan has a clear and consistent position on the Middle East peace process, based on a two-State solution approach. We support a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side in peace with Israel.

As an active member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), my country, along with other OIC member States, is a firm defender of the ideal of dialogue among nations and peoples of diverse religious identity. In Astana we recently hosted the OIC Summit on Science and Technology on the margins of the International Exhibition Expo 2017. While the Summit was devoted to science and technology matters, the participants were not in a position to ignore the current suffering of the Rohingya community. The OIC member States condemned those continued violations and called for dialogue among the United Nations, the OIC and the Government of Myanmar to stop the humanitarian crisis. Those events have once again highlighted the relevance of our initiative in establishing the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Kazakhstan is fully committed to strengthening and improving United Nations peacekeeping activities. We believe that the Secretary-General's new approach to peacekeeping reform, with a cross-pillar approach focusing on prevention and sustaining peace, will improve the effectiveness and accountability of peacekeeping operations. We are confident that, if we ensure flexibility and partnerships, they will not only encourage the active involvement and engagement of new countries but could also increase the effectiveness of peace operations. My country is committed to increasing its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping by sending more military observers and staff officers to United Nations missions. We recently declared that we had reached the second level

of peacekeeping-unit preparedness for deployment to United Nations peacekeeping missions in the United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System.

Earlier this year I presented President Nazarbayev's policy address to the Security Council. Its seven priorities call for ensuring humankind's survival through a world free of nuclear weapons by 2045 and through the prevention and elimination of military confrontation at the regional and global levels, thereby generating a model for a regional zone of peace, security, cooperation and development in Central Asia. It calls for all stakeholders to work globally to combat international terrorism and extremism, promote peace and security in Africa, implement the SDGs and work for reform of the Security Council and the United Nations system.

Kazakhstan will hold the presidency of the Council for the month of January 2018. The major event we are planning during that period will be a high-level open debate on global peace and security. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our invitation to all Member States to participate in the debate at the highest level. Our presidency will focus particularly on security and stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia through the prism of Afghanistan's peaceful integration, economically and politically, into regional and global processes.

My country remains deeply committed to sustainable development. In the face of the reality of climate change, Kazakhstan, despite its abundant conventional energy resources, is committed to achieving a green economy by diversifying and developing alternative energy sources. That led us to choose "Future energy" as the theme for the Astana Expo 2017 international exhibition. Throughout the summer, 115 countries and 22 international organizations, including the United Nations, its funds, agencies and programmes, showcased their creative experiences. That enormous undertaking is clear evidence of Kazakhstan's pledge to carry forward the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of the best ways to promote a green economy and green business is the use of the legacy of the Expo infrastructure. With the support of five United Nations agencies, we are establishing a "Future energy" international centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects. Its activities will be in full compliance with Kazakhstan's Green Bridge Partnership Programme, as reflected in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The Expo infrastructure will also house an Astana international financial centre and a centre for information-technology start-ups. We invite all Member States to participate in their activities.

As I mentioned earlier, we hosted the first-ever OIC Summit on Science and Technology within the framework of the Expo, an event that underlined the importance of technological modernization in achieving unity and solidarity in the 1.5-billion-strong Islamic world. The high-level meeting, which was attended by 15 presidents and dignitaries from 57 States, emphasized the clear and undeniable link between security and development and recognized that building a sustainable future for our nations is the only way to end challenges and threats to their security. In support of the OIC's endeavours, the President of Kazakhstan proposed creating a 15-member OIC forum, similar to the Group of 20, designed to streamline our scientific and economic cooperation. He invited Islamic nations to jointly develop the Expo legacy in the areas of Islamic finance and green technologies, and established a prize for Islamic science and innovations.

In conclusion, I would like to stress how vital it is that we preserve peace and stability and ensure the gradual and sustainable development of our fragile world. We do not have the luxury of being able to make mistakes and then going back to correct them. We call on all world leaders to redouble their efforts and their goodwill with the goal of making progress towards lasting peace and prosperity for all.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Alfonso Maria Dastis Quecedo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Dastis Quecedo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly and to wish you every success in that important role. The seventy-second session is also the first of Secretary-General António Guterres's term, and he can count on Spain's unwavering support in carrying out his work.

Spain wants to redouble its efforts to achieve a fairer, freer and more united world. That reaffirmation of our commitment makes particular sense in the wake of the ruthless terrorist attacks that struck the cities of Barcelona and Cambrils on 17 August. From this rostrum, I want to express the sincere gratitude of the

Spanish people for the many heartfelt expressions of solidarity and affection that we have received from all over the world. Terrorism will be defeated with unity, perseverance and the full force of the law.

Spain is a free and open society. Our rights and freedoms are protected by the social and democratic rule of law enshrined in our Constitution. The Spanish Government cannot, and will not, cease to defend the rule of law and the values it inspires — freedom, equality, justice and political pluralism. Spain's public authorities have the duty to ensure the rights and freedoms of all Spaniards. Any challenge to the principles of democracy represents a serious attack on our peaceful and free coexistence. Pitting any alleged legitimate claim against the rule of law of the Constitution will inevitably result in the violation of the fundamental rights of millions of citizens and is incompatible with democracy.

In the same conviction and determination with which we defend a constitutional and democratic Spain, we reaffirm the values, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As His Majesty King Don Felipe VI indicated from this rostrum a year ago, the Charter

> "was not simply a beacon that lit the dark times of the past, but ... also illuminates our present and our future." (*A/71/PV.10, p. 6*)

Spain undertook its Security Council mandate during the 2015-2016 biennium with a sense of responsibility. We made significant contributions in the areas of non-proliferation, counter-terrorism and support for its victims, preventive diplomacy, the humanitarian agenda and increasing the transparency of the Council's work. We will bring the same attitude to our service on the Human Rights Council for the 2018-2020 triennium, if on 16 October the members of the Assembly entrust us with that responsibility. The defence and promotion of human rights is a priority of Spain's foreign policy.

Today's world is highly interdependent. Extreme poverty, hunger, desertification, global warming and the preservation of forests and oceans are serious and urgent challenges that require concerted action. Spain affirms its full commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which inspires our policies. We are preparing for a voluntary review of our implementation of the 2030 Agenda in July 2018. It requires us to make tremendous collective efforts to ensure that no one is left behind. We must work to combat inequality, foster prosperity and provide job opportunities to young people on a planet that must remain habitable for generations to come. The future livability of large areas of the planet is inextricably linked to fulfilment of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and we must act accordingly.

Large displacements of people have reached unprecedented levels in recent years. The two global compacts on refugees and migrants that we have committed to adopting in 2018 should confirm our desire to provide a concerted, equitable and humane response to the problem of refugees and contribute to managing migrant flows among their countries of origin, transit and destination. Both issues deserve to be treated individually.

Regrettably, the scourge of war and threats to peace persist in many parts of the world. We have been talking here about the conflict in Syria for seven years. We are heartened by the decrease in hostilities and by the victories against Da'esh, but we remain concerned about how specific interests are put ahead of a political solution that, with United Nations mediation, could lead to a genuine transition. The United Nations also has a central role in promoting a political agreement in Yemen that would end the most serious humanitarian crisis in the world today.

Turning to Iraq, the Government has successfully reclaimed Mosul and other territories from the horror of Da'esh. Spain would like to help the new Iraq by, inter alia, assisting with the training of its security forces. We support the reconstruction of the country and reconciliation among its citizens, and we reject political undertakings that detract from key efforts to consolidate a free, democratic and united Iraq.

In Lebanon, we welcome the recent renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, an operation in which Spain's armed forces play a substantive part.

We count on the rigorous implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, which will contribute to nuclear non-proliferation and peace in the region.

On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the parties must return to the spirit of Madrid and to the negotiating table. The status quo is not sustainable. We are concerned about the trends we see on the ground that

are inconsistent with the two-State solution. Only two democratic States, living side by side within secure and recognized borders, will meet the legitimate expectations of Israelis and Palestinians.

Spain has always accorded priority to the Mediterranean, which we have sought to transform into an area of peace and prosperity. To that end, it is vital to encourage greater cooperation, such as that promoted by the Union for the Mediterranean.

Peace and prosperity in the Maghreb are of prime importance to Spain. My country welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to resume talks between the parties to the Western Sahara dispute. We are confident that his new Personal Envoy will facilitate progress towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that offers self-determination to the people of Western Sahara, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Libya has Spain's full support in his efforts to find a political solution based on a united country and in accordance with the Libyan Political Agreement.

Spain pays special and preferential attention to the African continent. Africa needs peace, stability, economic growth and sound institutions. We firmly believe in its potential, which will be compounded when conflicts cease, peace has been consolidated and social cohesion deepens.

Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia are two recent success stories that should set the tone for the other conflicts that continue to affect the continent. We reiterate our belief that the solution to those conflicts will depend upon fully understanding them and working together to find solutions to achieve inclusive development.

We remain deeply concerned about the situation in Mali, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. I would like to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets who lost their lives in those countries and in other United Nations missions. Spain has established strong links with the countries of the Sahel. We want them to view Spain as a close and supportive country, on which they can depend upon to combat terrorism and humanitarian crises, such as the crisis affecting the Lake Chad basin region.

We are following with concern the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call for respect for constitutional provisions, and dialogue in the quest for agreements on which coexistence is based. Similarly, we call on the Burundian authorities to act responsibly and with respect for constitutional legality.

The international community has invested considerable resources in support of Afghanistan since 2001 and, in the past year, has reiterated its commitment to the country. Spain believes that it is essential to safeguard the promise of an Afghan society that is free of extremism and terrorism and respectful of human rights, including the rights of women and children.

The nuclear and ballistic proliferation programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are one of the main threats to international peace. The resumption of tests is a blatant challenge to Security Council resolutions and seriously undermines the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, to which Spain is firmly committed. We reiterate our call to the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon a path that leads inexorably to the country's political and economic isolation and to genuinely opt for substantive negotiations for the complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Latin America and the Caribbean are undergoing profound changes to their institutions and are seeking new integration mechanisms. In that regard, we consider that the Pacific Alliance is a successful model of political and economic cooperation and that its dialogue with the Southern Common Market will lead to a promising future for the region.

Spain welcomes the peace agreement reached in Colombia. We would like to contribute actively to the consolidation of that peace. We participated in the United Nations Mission in Colombia to oversee the laying down of weapons. We welcome the progress made in that process, and we are open to taking part in the new United Nations Verification Mission, which, from 26 September, will be tasked with verifying the reintegration of the contingents of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia. In addition, we also support the consolidation of the peace process with development actions taken at the bilateral, European and multilateral levels. We also welcome the prospects for the cessation of hostilities with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional, and we offer our assistance in that endeavour.

Spain also has fraternal ties to Venezuela. We therefore fervently hope that Venezuelans can once again live in democracy, peace and freedom. We urge

the Government, within the framework of ongoing regional efforts, to engage in genuine dialogue with the opposition, respectful of the constitutional framework, the separation and integrity of powers and of human rights. That dialogue should lead to the release of all political prisoners, the holding of free and transparent elections and the end of the humanitarian crisis. That will restore a voice to the Venezuelan people. My country will spare no effort to make that possible.

Spain supports the difficult but necessary work of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) to strengthen the rule of law in the country. It encourages continued cooperation between the Guatemalan authorities and CICIG. We hope that the recent misunderstandings between the two entities can be overcome through dialogue and understanding. CICIG is an important instrument for supporting Guatemala in its quest for governance, the proper functioning of its institutions, prosperity, and the well-being of the Guatemalan people and their contribution to Central American integration.

The development and stabilization of Haiti are also a major objective for Spain. My country has participated in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti since its inception. We will continue to support the work of the United Nations in the new phase initiated by Security Council resolution 2350 (2017).

The rule of law at the international level cannot allow the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States to be violated. The annexation of Crimea is a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and is an outright breach of international law. It is regrettable that such an event occurred in twenty-first century Europe. We are also concerned about the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, whose resolution requires compliance with the Minsk agreements. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine deserves our full support.

The European Union is one of the most admirable legal and political structures to have emerged since the Second World War. It has brought about unprecedented peace and prosperity in Europe. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union saddens us, but we will work to conclude the negotiations on the new relations between the United Kingdom and the European Union with an agreement that preserves the close and fruitful links between them.

In the context of Brexit, Spain has made a generous proposal to resolve the Gibraltar issue. It combines the unwavering claim of Spanish sovereignty over the colony with a statute that benefits the Rock's inhabitants, so that they may continue to enjoy the advantages of European Union membership. We invite the United Kingdom to negotiate an agreement based on those premises, putting an end to an anachronism that is completely outlandish given the excellent relationship between our two countries. We must not allow more time to pass without fulfilling the United Nations mandate calling on us to negotiate the Gibraltar issue.

The Hispano-Roman philosopher Seneca wrote,

> "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult."

We have no choice but to dare to face, together and with determination, the problems that afflict us. With commitment, perseverance and humility we can make great progress. The road is long and does not allow for delays. Let us make the fulfilment of the San Francisco Charter's aspirations for peace, sustainable development and human rights the imperative goal that guides our work during this session.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Minister of Immigration and Asylum of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Minister Miroslav Lajčák, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. You are a long-standing friend, and I know that you will be able to successfully carry out the task entrusted to you.

My thoughts today are especially with the United States, Mexico and the Caribbean, which have been repeatedly struck by misfortune. My country is doing everything in its power to assist them in those humanitarian emergencies.

My message is simple. In a context where crisis hotbeds are proliferating and tensions are increasing, it is multilateralism that must prevail, meaning cooperation, dialogue and seeking solutions within the multilateral framework. More than ever, multilateralism and cooperation must take precedence over unilateral

approaches and national selfishness, in the interests of our common good and our common humanity.

When facing crises, the world expects a lot from the United Nations. The appointment of our new Secretary-General, António Guterres, through an unprecedented process characterized by greater transparency, grants him new legitimacy that he can put to the service of his work and that of the Organization itself. It also allows him to initiate three major reform projects — as he has indicated, with regard to the management of the Secretariat, the reorganization of the peace and security pillar and the repositioning of the United Nations development system. A rationalization of the latter, both at Headquarters and in the field, is of particular interest to my country, as 30 per cent of our official development assistance is channelled through multilateral organizations.

Reform efforts must be borne on all fronts and all aspects of our Organization. In that regard, progress is still to be made on the part of the Security Council. It must become more transparent, even though efforts have been made in that area. It must become more representative of today's world. It is also worth remembering that Security Council membership carries obligations as well as rights. We regret that in the past 12 months we have seen abusive use of the right of the veto. Luxembourg was one of the first to advocate the code of conduct for the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group to prevent crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We also strongly support the French-Mexican initiative, whereby relevant States give up their right to the veto in the event of mass atrocity.

For the United Nations to be able to implement an ambitious agenda, it must have sufficient resources. However, the budgetary situation of the United Nations remains difficult, notably, but not solely, because of the new approach by the American Administration. That may prevent agencies from fulfilling their core mission. Clearly, we need to go back to the drawing board. My country supports the idea of a budgetary compact for development.

Luxembourg contributes 1 per cent of its gross national income to official development assistance. Our annual voluntary contributions to the various agencies is in excess of $35 million for 2017. The funding requirements for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are enormous. Progress has been made in terms of funding to combat climate change. To take the case of Luxembourg, my country has set up a green stock exchange with a current capitalization of more than €57 billion. We plan to use that model to set up future instruments for sustainable development financing on the basis of a broader range of development goals.

At the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July, Luxembourg presented its voluntary national review for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The preparation of that review enriched the debate in my country, enabling us to mobilize efforts and strengthen ownership among all stakeholders of the 2030 Agenda. Those efforts will translate into the adoption of a new sustainable development plan that will guide the work of the public authorities and that of civil society and private-sector actors in the decade ahead.

My country acts with conviction within both a European and a multilateral framework. The context of globalization means that there is no other choice. That is true in the area of trade, even though bilateral regional agreements may complement that framework. That is also true in a whole series of other areas, above all in the fight against climate change. We are fully committed to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and we regret that one of the major international actors has distanced itself from that instrument. We hope that it will be possible to bring that actor back, as it is true that a truly global framework would not be complete without it. I would also like to point out my country's support for the French initiative of a global pact for the environment, which will be able to provide a political framework in the future, giving coherence to all existing instruments.

If there is one phenomenon that is more a product of globalization than any other, it is population movements. There are multiple reasons for that, such as demographic pressure, climate change, conflict and humanitarian disasters. Understandable economic motives, both in countries of origin and in countries of destination, are also often the basis for such movements. In any case, that is a problem that needs to be addressed, and it is very useful that it should be dealt with at the level of our Organization. Next year will see the establishment of new instruments with regard to both refugees and migration. The dividing line between the two will not always be easy to draw.

With regard to migration, the current phase has allowed us to take stock of the situation, which does not always correspond to preconceived notions. First, there is the fact that most of the major transregional movements today are South-South movements. Secondly, there is the fact that, depending on the circumstances, many countries are simultaneously countries of origin, countries of transit and host countries. It is therefore an issue that goes beyond a single North-South logic, although I do not deny the difficulties and concerns arising from the European refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016. Many refugees were forced to move either due to legitimate concerns for their physical safety or humanitarian disasters arising from conflicts.

In that regard, the situation in the Middle East continues to raise concerns. Beyond the persistent obstacles to seeking a political solution between Israel and Palestine, the situations in Syria and Yemen are apocalyptic, Libya is engulfed by violence and civil war, and new tensions are emerging in the Gulf countries. The international community must do everything in its power to reduce those tensions.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has lost none of its core importance. The total absence of credible political prospects could lead at any moment to a new eruption of violence and creates fertile ground for hatred and terrorism. Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), adopted on 23 December 2016, which again calls on Israel to immediately and completely cease all its settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, is not directed against Israel. The resolution targets a status quo that has become untenable and unacceptable. It aims to contribute to ensuring peace for Israel.

The recent announcement of general elections being organized in Palestine offers a slight hope for reconciliation. We must seize that opportunity, which also, clearly, requires responsibility on the part of Palestinian leaders, and I have trust in President Abbas in that regard. By continuing settlement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the Israeli Government is directly jeopardizing the two-State solution, the only fair and equitable way to make possible a lasting solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this fiftieth year of Israeli occupation, the trend on the ground is very worrying. But that is not a reason to give up. On the contrary, the international community must mobilize to change the situation.

In Syria, all stakeholders must realize that peace will return only if a comprehensive, genuine, inclusive political transition is implemented. In this seventh year of the conflict, a lasting political solution depends upon the commitment of countries that can exert political, military or economic influence on the warring parties in Syria. Every effort must be made to ensure that negotiations in Geneva under the United Nations continue and make progress. The Astana process alone is not enough. We should improve humanitarian access and extend the de-escalation zones and local ceasefires, which remain a glimmer of hope for a ravaged population.

In Iraq, it was announced that a referendum would be held on 25 September 2018 in the Kurdistan region. Our position is to support the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. A united, stable and democratic Iraq should guarantee the interests of all citizens. The federal Government and the Kurdish Regional Government established excellent cooperation during the horrible military campaign against Da'esh. The differences that remain between them must be resolved through a peaceful and constructive dialogue that leads to an agreed solution in the framework of the Iraqi Constitution.

We have to do everything we can to calm the situation in the region. It also means maintaining and rigorously implementing the Iran nuclear deal, which helps to reduce the risk of proliferation. The agreement was signed not only bilaterally between the United States and Iran, but also by the European Union, Russia, China, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, as well as being endorsed by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

That is also important in the context of the North Korean regime's headlong rush, which is multiplying provocations by accelerating its nuclear and ballistic programme through nuclear tests and missile launches. That is unacceptable and, like many other countries, Luxembourg strongly condemns those acts by Pyongyang. The Security Council has just strengthened the sanctions regime, and the European Union will do the same. Only the determination and the resolve of the international community will bring the regime back to reason, and hopefully to the negotiation table. If we call for resolve, we must also avoid an escalation that would lead to a catastrophe. To reach true de-escalation, we must not close the door to diplomacy and dialogue. The Iran agreement can serve as an inspiration in that

regard. It demonstrates that an appropriate policy, combining pressure and dialogue, can lead to results.

Africa continues to mobilize the energies of international actors in the areas of development, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and combating terrorism. The political and humanitarian situations in South Sudan, around Lake Chad, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are extremely worrying. As in the case of the Sahel and Mali, such situations are often the result of non-State actors, which render a number of mechanisms inoperative.

Luxembourg is committed to the activities of its African partners, including at the regional level. We will therefore support the deployment of the Force conjointe du G5 Sahel.

In that context, it is also essential to develop the various instruments of international criminal justice. We must continue to support the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose scope should be extended. I would like to say here how pleased we are that the trend towards disengagement by African States has been halted. Clearly, the scope of the ICC is not confined to Africa, and any such perception should be avoided.

We have supported the international, impartial and independent inquiry mechanism on the most serious crimes committed in Syria since March 2011. We call upon all Member States to participate in financing the mechanism before it can be incorporated into the United Nations regular budget. We also support initiatives on the responsibility of Da'esh for the crimes committed in Iraq, as endorsed today by the Security Council (see S/PV.8052).

The current session of the General Assembly focuses on people and their right to peace and a decent life. Human rights and the dignity of the human being must guide all our actions. All of the situations I have just mentioned give rise to human rights violations. In a cruel irony, those violations are sometimes also committed by those who were least expected to do so. I congratulate Secretary-General António Guterres for having referred the extreme deterioration of the situation of the ethnic and religious minority in Myanmar — the Rohingya minority — to the Security Council. The Burmese authorities must cease military operations and ensure humanitarian access. Ethnic cleansing has no place in the twenty-first century, not in Myanmar or anywhere else.

Human trafficking, sexual exploitation in conflict situations and violations of the rights of children in armed conflict situations are all scourges that are unfortunately still raging. We must not be content with denouncing them, but ensure that we support and strengthen our financial and human resources, including the institutions that counter those scourges.

The right to dignity is also reflected in respect for the physical integrity of women and girls. In recent decades, we have been able to reduce maternal mortality by almost half, but access by women and girls to sexual and reproductive rights in health care is now being challenged in some parts of the world. Every day, more than 800 women and adolescent girls die from pregnancy-related causes. More than 22 million unsafe abortions are recorded each year. Those statistics are horrifying. That is why Luxembourg, alongside our partners such as Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, has joined the SheDecides initiative by providing €2 million in additional funding this year to support the United Nations Population Fund. Women's health is one of the top priorities of Luxembourg's health strategy and cooperation. I assure the Assembly that my country will continue to support the access of girls and women to sexual and reproductive rights and health.

Sometimes defending human rights is reduced to its simplest expression — no more or less than ensuring the physical survival of the population. I mentioned catastrophic humanitarian situations in several countries. Luxembourg responded to the United Nations appeal to the famine crisis in three African countries and Yemen. For those four countries — Somalia, South Sudan, Nigeria and Yemen — my country has pledged more than €10 million in 2017. We are also a signatory to the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing, which gives more flexibility, predictability and continuity to international humanitarian efforts.

I mentioned our Organization and the world. Let me say a few words about Europe. Europe is not immune to the tensions in the international order, or should I say, international disorder? In Ukraine, the past year was marked by renewed hostilities, with numerous violations of the ceasefire, despite the efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Trilateral Contact Group. I hope that the Normandy format talks can continue and lead the parties to fully implement the Minsk agreements in

order to guarantee the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of Ukraine.

Europe is not immune to the upheavals of globalization, either. It is victim to repeated acts of pointless and indiscriminate acts of terrorism. It is also a place where nationalist movements are fuelled by an anti-immigrant or anti-refugee backlashes. Moreover, sharing the burden of taking in refugees has been far from exemplary in some communities, but also in some States, including European Union member States. And yet, while they were capable of adding momentum to the worst fears a year ago, populist movements are on the decline in Europe, even if they are often an electoral reality. The taking in of hundreds of thousands of refugees occurs year in year out, and there is renewed optimism, including prospects for economic growth. I call for a Europe that rejects withdrawal into isolation, a Europe free of conflict that does not give way to intimidation, not even in its own neighbourhood, a Europe that puts the person at the centre of its efforts and which is resolutely committed to the multilateral system.

The tensions in the international system are the result of major trends such as growing inequality, migratory flows and climate change. They pit two visions against each other — one based on force, the law of the jungle, unilateralism and national selfishness, even nationalism; the other on the primacy of multilateralism, solidarity, universal values, human rights and the rule of law. Luxembourg is committed to the latter vision. The challenges I have outlined need to be tackled in a multilateral system with strong institutions — a multilateral system inspired by the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrines human dignity and the sovereign equality of all States. That is the best recourse for the vast majority of the States of the international community and for the peoples of the United Nations, which we represent here. At its heart, multilateralism is the foundation of the United Nations. To challenge it would be to question the inspiration behind the United Nations — the creation of an international order based on the rule of law, in the service of peace and freedom.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Ms. Tørnæs (Denmark): This session of the General Assembly opens during a period of unprecedented change. Threats and challenges such as poverty, terrorism, climate change, violations of human rights, gender inequality, armed conflict, displacement and irregular migration are ever more interconnected. Our responses to those challenges must reflect their complexity. Our responses will require better and deeper cooperation, and must involve more stakeholders, new solutions and more effective international institutions.

The evolving global landscape gives us an opportunity to renew and redefine how we work together. The United Nations must seize this opportunity. Denmark congratulates Mr. António Guterres on the successful beginning of his term as Secretary-General. He can count on Denmark's full support in his efforts. More than ever, we need leadership and common purpose to steer the Organization in a new direction. Staying on the current path is not an option if we want to maintain the legitimacy of the United Nations. Fundamental and ambitious reform is the only way forward. This week, the Secretary-General laid out a strong vision for a reformed United Nations and a call for action to all — from Governments to the staff of this great Organization, to our partners outside this building. We must all invest in, and commit to, that agenda for change. As Member States, we have a responsibility to find common solutions that will turn our shared goals into positive change and protect the principles and values of the United Nations.

That spirit must also guide our work in the years to come. Denmark is committed to international cooperation through the United Nations, built on shared values, the rule of law and human rights. That is one of the reasons that Denmark is running for a seat on the Human Rights Council for the term 2019-2021. Denmark has never before been a member of the Human Rights Council. As a longstanding supporter of the United Nations and a consistent advocate for the protection of the dignity and rights of all people, we believe that we could make a significant contribution in the Council, based on a commitment to promote dignity, dialogue and development.

Denmark is committed to an ambitious follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, at home and abroad. We have provided at least 0.7 per cent of our gross national income in official development assistance for the past 40 years and will continue to do so in future. We call on all developed countries to meet the 0.7 per cent target. With only 13 years left to achieve

the Sustainable Development Goals, we have no time to waste when it comes to fundamentally rethinking the United Nations Development System and its support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary-General has presented a set of clear reform proposals. Now we must come together and support their implementation. This is not a donor-versus-developing-country scenario, or a North-versus-South debate. Let us support the Secretary-General's plan because we agree that we all have an interest in a United Nations that is cost-effective and can arrive at coherent and sustainable solutions on the ground. Citizens around the world expect nothing less. We need to break with the status quo, particularly in four priority areas.

First, a reformed United Nations development system must deliver on the promise of unified country-level engagements where silo-thinking, competition for resources and fragmented support strategies become a thing of the past.

Secondly, in our response to the many complex crises around the world, we need to build a stronger bridge between immediate relief and long-term development objectives. Our support for United Nations humanitarian work is as strong as ever. Denmark is one of the world's largest humanitarian donors, and in our 2018 aid budget we will allocate more funds to humanitarian action than ever before. We are fully behind the Secretary-General's call for a new way of working in responding to protracted humanitarian crises and displacement. We must meet the needs of those affected, while also giving hope for a better future. The new way of working is about much stronger cooperation and coordination among partners in and outside the United Nations system, and Denmark will continue to play a leading role in advancing that agenda.

Thirdly, the United Nations development system needs to be built on the basic premise that neither the United Nations nor Governments have the capacity or resources to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Partnering with the private sector, civil society, academia and innovators will be crucial. The United Nations must rethink how it incorporates those resources on our way towards meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Denmark is taking the lead to support strong and meaningful principle-based partnerships. Together with our strategic partners — Chile, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Viet Nam — the Danish Government launched a new initiative this week in support of the 2030 Agenda, entitled Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030. The initiative brings together Governments, companies, cities, think tanks and investors to establish and boost public-private partnerships for a greener tomorrow. Through the initiative, we will leverage partnerships that will help us take better care of our planet.

Fourthly, Denmark welcomes the Secretary-General's strong commitment to gender equality in our reform efforts. Women and girls all over the world must be empowered to contribute to stronger communities and societies. Ensuring equal opportunities for women is absolutely crucial for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. In the Danish Government's view, gender equality is first and foremost a question of dignity and ensuring the human rights of all women and girls, including safeguarding sexual and reproductive health and rights. That is fundamentally about the right to decide over one's own body. As one of the founding members of the SheDecides movement, Denmark is committed to continuing to push for progress and protect the rights of all women and girls around the world. Just recently, Denmark announced a major increase in its contribution to the United Nations Population Fund. Too many young people today face a lack of opportunities and poverty. We have the largest youth population in history, and Denmark is committed to helping youth acquire the means and skills required to be drivers of development.

If we want to ensure a more stable and peaceful future, Member States must adhere to international law and common rules for coexistence and cooperation. Regrettably, we continue to see Member States that put national interests before respect for the dignity and rights of their citizens, or ignore the legitimate concerns of their neighbours, as well as regional and global stability. The nuclear and missile tests conducted by the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute a blatant disregard of our collective security, non-proliferation norms and rules, and the continued demands by the Security Council. Denmark strongly condemns that irresponsible behaviour and calls on the regime in Pyongyang to de-escalate the current situation and commit to a peaceful solution in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

The recent outbreak of violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state is deeply concerning. Denmark calls on the Government of Myanmar to facilitate humanitarian

assistance to all those in need and commit to aiding the safe return of civilians fleeing from the conflict. We welcome the Government's commitment to implement without delay the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, chaired by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The violence must stop, and the security forces must ensure the protection of civilians. We condemn the attacks on security forces and the subsequent serious human rights violations. We applaud the Government of Bangladesh for providing protection to civilians fleeing across the border. Denmark stands ready to assist both Myanmar and Bangladesh in pursuing integrated humanitarian and development solutions for the affected areas.

Denmark stands in solidarity with all those affected by terrorism and violent extremism. We continue to be an active participant in combating those threats to our societies, including through our military and civilian contributions to the Global Coalition against Da'esh in Iraq and Syria. We are also a key partner in other conflict areas, such as Afghanistan, Mali, the Sahel and Somalia. To defeat terrorism, we need to supplement our military effort with broad-based engagements that also focus on cutting off terrorist financing and repelling extremist propaganda online and offline, as well as stabilizing areas liberated from Da'esh and building peace in conflict-affected countries.

The United Nations plays a central role when it comes to stabilizing war-torn countries and building lasting peace, but comprehensive reforms are needed. Denmark welcomes the vision of the Secretary-General for the peace and security architecture of the United Nations with a streamlined, coordinated and effective response in the field. As Member States, we have an obligation with respect to, and a shared interest in, supporting those critical reforms so that the United Nations can fulfil its purpose and its promise to the world. The time for bold ambitions is now.

If we do not support reforms and deny generations' hope and opportunity for a more prosperous future, we will continue to witness international turmoil and unprecedented levels of displacement. We will continue to witness people forced to leave their homes and venture out on dangerous journeys. And we will continue to witness many people falling into the hands of relentless smugglers and traffickers.

Denmark contributes significantly to helping displaced populations and others in emergency situations live dignified lives. Last year, Denmark contributed more than $80 million to the Syrian crisis alone. Our programmes focus on helping refugees in their regions of origin, which enables us to use our funds more efficiently and ultimately help more people.

Unmanaged migration poses a significant global challenge. We need to strengthen our cooperation and commitment to existing international legal frameworks. In that regard, Denmark welcomes the dialogue taking place in preparation for the global compact on migration.

Through leadership and a renewed commitment to a reformed United Nations, innovation and willingness to challenge old ways of thinking, strong partnerships across the public-private spectrum, across age and gender divides and across different organizations and institutions, the opportunity to create a new path for our United Nations is here.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now give the floor to those speakers who have asked to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Pavlichenko (Ukraine): I take the floor to exercise Ukraine's right of reply with regard to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation earlier today (see A/72/PV.12). Due to the lateness of the hour, I will be very brief. After all, the last thing that the General Assembly needs is to put the aggressor out of its misery by engaging with it.

That is why I will limit myself to just one simple fact, namely, that Russia has been recognized by the United Nations — by the General Assembly, the most representative organ of the Organization — loud and clear as an occupying Power in Ukraine, and by extension as a side to the conflict. What does that mean? It means that, as an occupying Power and side to the conflict, it has neither a legal nor a moral right to pronounce itself over Ukraine in this Hall, at least not until Russia returns Crimea to Ukraine, withdraws from the Donbas region and pays in full for its aggression.

Ms. Gambhir (India): I take the floor to exercise India's right of reply in response to Pakistan's defence of terrorism. It is extraordinary that the State that protected Osama Bin Laden and sheltered Mullah

Omar should have the gumption to play the victim. By now, all of Pakistan's neighbours are painfully familiar with its tactics of creating narratives that are based on distortion, deception and deceit. The General Assembly, and the world beyond, knows that efforts at creating alternative facts do not change reality.

In its short history, Pakistan has become a geography synonymous with terror. The quest for a land of the pure has actually produced a land of pure terror. Pakistan is now terrorist-stan, with a flourishing industry that produces and exports global terrorism. Its current state can be attributed to the fact that Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, a leader of a United Nations-designated terrorist organization, Lashkar-e-Taiba, is now sought to be legitimized as a leader of a political party. It is a country with a counter-terrorism policy that mainstreams and upstreams terrorists, by either providing safe havens to global terror leaders in its military towns or protecting them with political careers. None of that can justify Pakistan's avaricious efforts in coveting the territories of its neighbours. Insofar as India is concerned, Pakistan must understand that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is, and will always remain, an integral part of India. However much it scales up cross-border terrorism, it will never succeed in undermining India's territorial integrity.

We also heard the delegation of Pakistan complain about the consequences of its supposed counter-terrorism efforts. Having diverted billions of dollars in international military and development aid towards creating a dangerous infrastructure of terror on its own territory, Pakistan is now speaking of the high cost of its terror industry. The polluter, in this case, is paying the price.

Even as terrorists thrive in Pakistan and roam its streets with impunity, we have heard it lecture about the protection of human rights in India. The world does not need lessons on democracy and human rights from a country whose own situation is charitably described as a failed State.

Terrorist-stan is in fact a territory whose contribution to the globalization of terror is unparalleled. Pakistan can only be counselled to abandon a destructive world view that has caused grief to the entire world. If it could be persuaded to demonstrate any commitment to civilization, order and peace, it might still find some acceptance in the comity of nations.

Mr. Salarzai (Afghanistan): My delegation exercises its right of reply owing to one Member State's erroneous claim regarding the presence of safe havens and sanctuaries in Afghanistan. That reference is a deliberate attempt by the Government of Pakistan to divert international attention away from Pakistan's longstanding failure to take effective action against various terrorist groups and sanctuaries on its territory. It remains evidently clear to the global community that the propagation of terrorist activities by State and non-State actors in neighbouring Pakistan constitutes the main source of insecurity in our country, Afghanistan, and the region.

Afghanistan has persistently and consistently sought to address that outstanding issue through various channels, including bilateral and other mechanisms. Nevertheless, efforts to that end have yielded no results whatsoever. At this juncture, Pakistan has another opportunity to engage in a comprehensive dialogue to resolve outstanding issues that have prevented it from adopting a clear and decisive stance in combating terrorism and a constructive approach for peace and security in Afghanistan and the wider region. In seeking a clear picture of the current situation, let us ask the following questions.

Where was Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of the international terrorist organization Al-Qaida, killed? The answer: near the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad. Where did the notorious leader of the Taliban, Mullah Mohammed Omar, die? The answer: in a hospital in Karachi, Pakistan. Where was Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the successor of Mullah Omar, found and killed by international forces? The answer: in Balochistan, Pakistan. And guess which country's passport he was using to travel to different locations? Again, Pakistan. Where is the leadership of the Quetta Shura and the Peshawar Shura located at this very moment? The names of those locations speak for themselves. From what country has almost every single terrorist element and group and more than 20 internationally recognized terrorist groups entered into Afghanistan and continue to do so? Pakistan.

I have mentioned just a few examples of the persistent support from Pakistan enjoyed by extremist groups. Moreover, that is not just hearsay from Afghanistan; it has been acclaimed and verified by very credible international sources. Long before an international intervention and the so-called civil war

in Afghanistan, Pakistan adopted a policy of the use of violent proxies in its pursuit of political objectives.

Although there is no need to do so, we wish to categorically reject any claim of any support provided to terrorist groups in Afghanistan. The facts speak for themselves. Now it is time for Pakistan to opt for a constructive approach in combating terrorism and promoting peace in our region.

Lastly, was it not His Excellency Prime Minister Abbasi himself who, in an interview a few days ago, admitted that the culprits of the massive terrorist bombing on 31 May in Kabul may have entered Afghanistan from Pakistan?

Moving forward, we will use any means possible, including negotiation and dialogue, to ensure security and stability for our people. In that context, our resolve and commitment to defeat terrorism is unwavering, and that is evidenced in the sacrifice of our brave Afghan National Defence and Security Forces every day.

Mr. Usman (Pakistan): It is unfortunate that India has chosen to criticize the statement made by the Prime Minister of Pakistan that reflects the sentiments and aspirations of the oppressed and suffering people of Jammu and Kashmir as they face tyranny, repression and brutalities by the illegal and unjust occupation by India. The plight of the Kashmiri people at the hands of the Indian occupation forces is being documented by the international community and reputable human rights organizations.

The people of India-occupied Jammu and Kashmir look to the international community, especially to the members of the Security Council, to deliver on their pledge to hold a free, fair and impartial plebiscite, under the auspices of the United Nations, to enable them to decide their future. Let me re-emphasize and reject any misconceptions that India may have wished to create. India is responsible for undermining regional peace and stability.

I have the sad duty to inform those present that only yesterday, due to unprovoked firing and mortar shelling by Indian forces on the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, at least 10 innocent civilians, including many women, lost their lives on the Pakistan side. The shelling continues unabated — a sad reminder of Indian intransigence and stubbornness. That, too, shall fail.

The strategy of an offensive defence and double-squeeze flouted blatantly by National Security Adviser Doval, which India believes can make it a regional hegemony, can never succeed. Indian operators of mayhem and terror, such as commander Jadav, caught red-handed in Pakistan while spreading sabotage, terrorism and espionage, can never fulfil Indian dreams, which will remain just that, dreams.

For our Bangladeshi brothers and sisters, let me add that they have to emerge from the narrative of hate and dispel the twisted notions of history. There are no takers for their contentions. The issues of 1971 were agreed upon and settled under the tripartite agreement of 1974, which was signed by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. We have to move on.

Instead of blaming others for its problems and failures, Afghanistan should focus on eradicating safe havens for terrorists in its undergoverned spaces and dealing with its white economy and narco-State problem. That is the major threat to regional peace and stability.

The meeting rose at 10.45 p.m.